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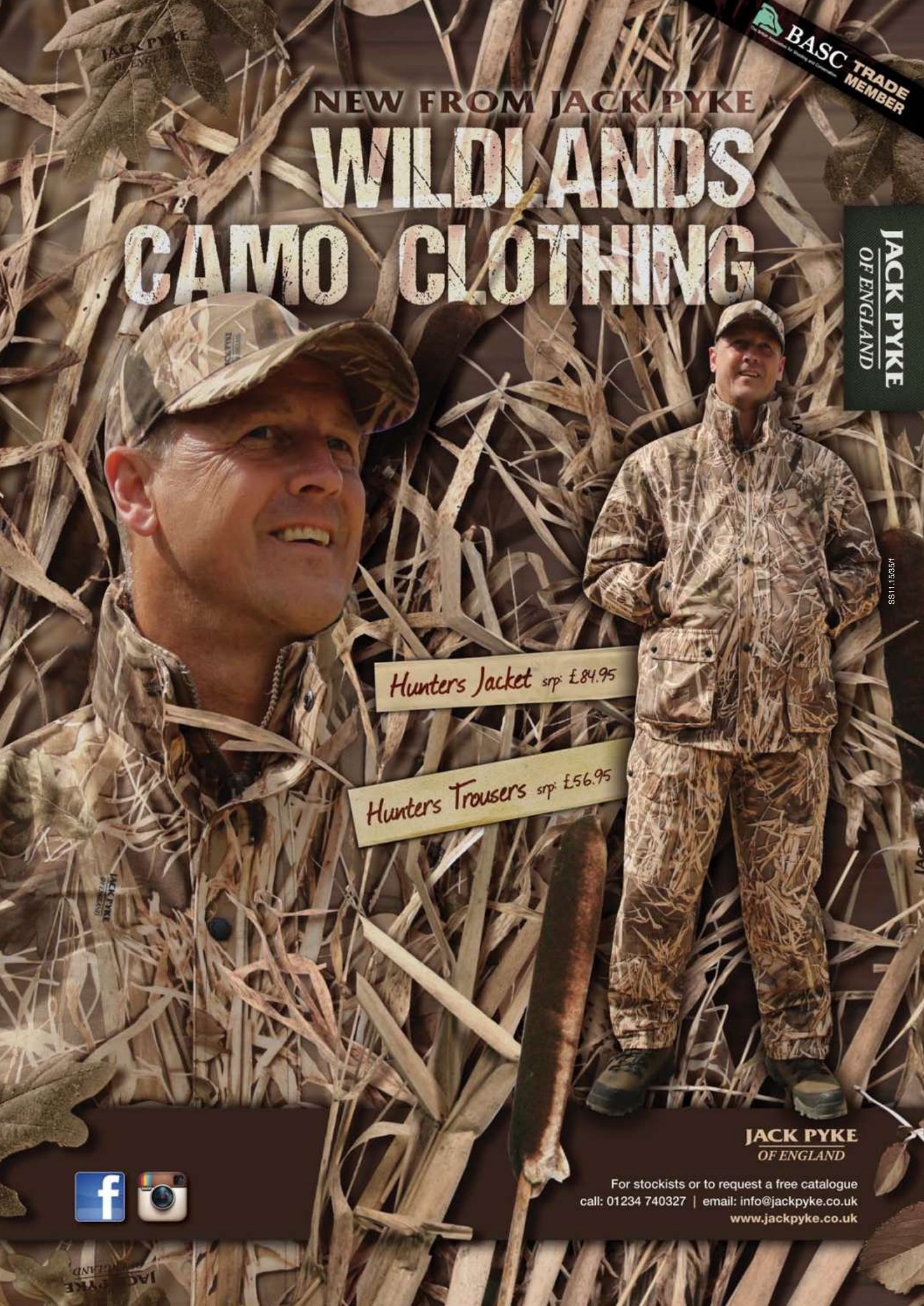
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A CURATE'S EGG

Commenting on the HMIC report "Targeting the Risk – An inspection of the efficiency and effectiveness of firearms licensing in police forces in England and Wales", Peter Glenser (BASC Council) and a barrister specialising in firearms law said: "The report is a curate's egg – good in parts. It reports that improvements are needed to deal with inconsistencies, lack of common training, inefficiency and in effectiveness that were identified in some licensing teams in England and Wales. Unfortunately, it never identifies lack of service to the certificate holders who pay for the service as a problem." Gary Ashton, Director of Firearms Operations at BASC said: "What is disappointing is that the report singularly fails to recognise the comprehensive nature of the work that has been underway with the Home Office for the past two and a half years to make the existing system of medical checks more dynamic. It is worrying that the report does not appear to understand the principles of modern risk management that underpin policing. This is a significant weakness within the report." BASC recently published a white paper recommending that the duration of certificates should be extended from 5 to 10 years. At a stroke this would relieve the pressure on police forces, allow them to focus staff on essential real time monitoring and deliver a proper service to licence holders. Unfortunately this solution was not understood by the HMIC review."

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Shooting SPORTS

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COVER PHOTOGRAPHY
Pete Moore

BASC Calls for 10-YEAR CERTIFICATES

A BASC white paper "Extending the duration of Firearm and Shotgun certificates" was launched at a meeting of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Shooting and Conservation in parliament today.

The white paper reviews the firearms licensing system and identifies problems in service, lack of compliance with the principles of better regulation, burdens on the police, peaks and troughs in the current five year licensing round and the adverse implications for public safety. It details the improvements to police information and reporting systems which, in many cases, are faster and better than were ever envisaged when the length of the current licence was increased from three to five years at the request of the police two decades ago. The document recommends the phased introduction of 10-year certificates and lists the benefits to service levels, the reduced burden on police forces and improvements in public safety.

Peter Glenser, the BASC Council member and a barrister specialising in firearms law, said: "Extending the length of the firearms certificates to ten years will remove the pressures, burdens, peaks and troughs within the system which should ensure greater efficiency, better service and with it; the improvement of public safety. " In the document Chief Constable Andy Marsh, the national lead for firearms within the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) gives qualified approval for the extension of the certificate term and lists improvements in medical monitoring, such as the "encoded reminder" being considered by the Home Office. He writes in the paper: "There is an opportunity, with appropriate supporting developments to deliver 10-year certification without compromising on public safety and on that basis I will work towards that end in support of BASC's proposal."

The BASC white Paper is available online here: http://basc.org.uk/extending-the-duration-of-firearm-and-shotgun-certificates/

Tree hugger!

Best Practice recommends a suspended gralloch if possible. Without doubt a cleaner and better evisceration can be carried out suspended, however if you don't have the kit and need to do it on the spot how do you get the body off the ground? Napier has the answer with their light weight Tree Hugger kit and you are ready to go, anywhere anytime; you just need a suitable tree trunk. The kit contains a Hi Vis 2m strap made from Cross Weave Webbing, it is non-slip, self-gripping and strong. Two S-hooks and two pairs of disposable gloves are included. Locate a suitable tree, ALL TREES ARE VERTICAL, then wrap the strap as shown and it will self grip, hock the animal and hang it one leg at a time. Simple, hygienic and quick! Roe and Muntjac can easily be lifted in this way. For Larger species, Fallow, Sika, Boar or even Reds, Napier recommends the use of their new AUTO LIFT, retractable ratchet that enables a beast up to 200Kg to be lifted easily. The whole kit weighs just 180 grams and is easily carried by its belt loop or in a hunters' bag and is available from Napier Stockists. RRP £18.99 Code 8004.

Visit: www. Napieruk.com

Clever stuff; Napier Tree Hugger used in conjunction with their new AUTO LIFT ratchet to lift a good sized fallow easily; looks like they got it right again...

Rigby's new engraver Geoffrey Lignon learned his trade at Liege Gunmaking School in Belgium

Rigby appoints new engraver

London gunmaker John Rigby & Co. has appointed master engraver Geoffrey Lignon to work full-time on its multi-award-winning rifles. Originally trained at the world famous Liege Gunmaking School in Belgium, 25-year old Geoffrey says working for Rigby is a dream come true: "I have been passionate about Africa and its wildlife ever since I was a child. My favourite animals to engrave have always been big game animals, so it is fantastic for me to work for a company like Rigby. I am very grateful to be given this chance and look forward to contributing to the great guns Rigby are making." Rigby's Managing Director Marc Newton added: "I was introduced to Geoffrey by one of our other guys. He showed me a plate with a buffalo on it and I thought 'this is the best buffalo I have ever seen engraved. Without hesitation, we offered him a job immediately!"

For more information, visit: www.johnrigbyandco.com

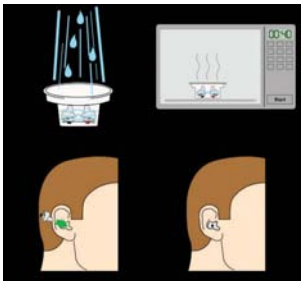
New broom!

The British Deer Society (BDS) has appointed Glyn Ingram as its new Training Manager

Announcing the appointment, BDS Chairman Michael Thick said: "We are delighted to welcome Glyn to the team. He joins us from a background of wide ranging deer management roles encompassing wild, park and farm deer and is very much looking forward to the challenge of his new post and sharing his experiences." Glyn added: "The BDS has a well-earned reputation for excellence in deer management training. I hope to be able to continue the outstanding work of my predecessor Dave Goffin and to widen the scope and delivery of courses BDS has to offer." After 13 years as Training Manager, Dave has now moved into a new role –Technical Manager. Glyn has had a lifelong interest in deer and natural history and will already be familiar to many BDS members of the East Anglia and South East Branches. He currently lives in North Norfolk with his partner Hayley and their two German shorthaired pointers. He can be contacted on 07920 452448 or trainingmanager@bds.org.uk.

For more information, visit www.bds.org.uk

What the Flugz!



Just 40-seconds in the microwave and your Flugz are cooked...

Brand new to the UK market, Flugz advanced hearing protection will change the way you use, buy and think about reusable earplugs.

Founded on an innovative and user-friendly moulding system, the Flugz are heated in a microwave for 40 seconds until flexible, then placed in your ear canal to mould perfectly to your unique contours. This ensures a perfect fit to block harmful sound waves from reaching your eardrum and makes the plugs exceptionally comfortable to wear all day. Flugz carry a Noise Reduction Rating of 21 decibels whilst still allowing you to hear low frequency sounds clearly and effectively, simultaneously remaining in place for hours without discomfort. Packaged in a handy, microwavable container, Flugz can be remoulded multiple times and are completely re-usable. These ingenious and cost-effective earplugs are now available from Bushwear for just £24.99.

Contact: Bushwear; www.bushwear.co.uk

Product safety warning and recall notice for IMR®4007SSC powder

IMR Legendary Powders is officially announcing a product safety warning and recall notice for IMR 4007SSC on the six lot numbers listed below. IMR has received reports that this particular powder in 1lb and 8lb containers may have become unstable due to possible rapid deterioration. Use of this product from these lot numbers shown on the enclosed label may result in spontaneous combustion, fire damage or possible serious injury.

- 10130139
- 10131139
- 10429139
- 10430139
- 80425139
- 80426139

WHAT TO DO:

- Stop using this product immediately! Fill the powder container with water which will render the product inert and safe for disposal.
- Mail, email or fax a copy of the powder label showing the lot number to the contact information below to include your name, address, phone and email.
- Replacement choice of any other IMR smokeless powder product will be shipped to you for no charge.
- If you have loaded the powder subject to this recall into ammunition, we recommend that you pull the bullets, remove the powder and wet the powder with water for safe disposal.

IMR deeply regrets any inconvenience this may cause, but we believe in safety first.

Contact information: IMR Powder Company, 6430 Vista Drive, Shawnee, KS 66218, email help@imrpowder.com, imrpowder.com, call 1-800-622-4366 or 913-362-9455 and fax 913-362-1307

THIS MONTH IN BRIEF

PACK IT!

John Field's unique 2-in-1 'Mac' travel bag allows you pack your gear but also include a pair of broken shotguns in an integral hard case, meaning it's now possible to streamline the luggage needed for a shooting trip. Made from a Cordura/cotton mix, the 75-litre waterproof bag is divided into two sections both with integrated 3-dial combination locks and the gun case section has integral wheels. RRP: £395
Visit: www.johnfield.eu

ULTIMATE SPOTTER!

Built to withstand the toughest conditions Bushnell's TROPHY XLT 20-60x 65mm spotting scope offers high quality optics, innovative features and incredible range at a value for money price. Water and fog-proof it features long-lasting rubber armour and incorporates porro prism technology, BaK-4 prism glass and multicoated lenses giving exceptional clarity and light transmission. RRP: £348.15 (15-45x 50mm also available rrp £299)
Visit www.shootingsports.edgarbrothers.com

TRUE COLOURS

Realtree's new Xtra Colours provide outdoorsmen and women with the opportunity to express their style and personality through a variety of fashion shades. Even when you're not in the thick of the forest Realtree Xtra Colours create a trendy getup. Tropical Heat, Wild Orchid and Surf Blue are not the usual names you would associate with camouflage, but there has been a strong demand for Realtree AP HD Camo in bold colours that do the opposite of what it is intended for.
Visit: www.business.realtree.com

Leica's new ER 6.5-26x56 LRS looks like a good bet for longer range requirements

RIFLESCOPE FOR AMBITIOUS SHOOTERS

Leica has extended its existing portfolio with their new ER 6.5-26x56 LRS (Long Range Shooting) scope. Newly developed it offers a high magnification range, fine reticules and sensitive rapid adjustment for ambitious shots at long distances. It gives you exceptionally high levels of magnification, light transmission and contrast. Minimal colour-fringing ensures that images seen are of the best optical quality, even at distance. Thanks to its finely tuned elevation tracking (0.2in/click/109yds), users can achieve absolute precision when sighting in and setting the planned point of impact. What's more it offers a large eye relief distance, making it safer for use with heavier calibres. New special 'long range' reticules with low crosshair thicknesses and coverage dimensions mean less of the target is obscured. The AquaDura® coating on the outer lenses repels dirt and water, ensuring a clear view even in poor weather conditions. Price looks good at £1,550 and all Leica Sport Optics come with a 10 year warranty – 3 years for electronics and 1 year accidental damage warranty on anything.
Visit: www.leica-camera.com

CAMP RIFLE?

Lightweight, foldable and comfortable to carry Chiappa's Little Squirrel single shot rifle is the perfect camp and field companion for hedgerow, pest and small game shooters. Robustly built it has an all-metal construction with a simple break action making it fool proof to use. It features a carbon steel barrel (threaded ½ x 20 UNF), external hammer and a wire stock with a12-round cartridge holder. It also incorporates a fixed front sight with an adjustable rear aperture for windage and elevation. The forend takes the form of a short, 4-way Picatinny block so you can also fit an optic as well as a torch etc. Weighing in at under 3lb the Little Squirrel is available in .22LR (18.5" barrel) and in 9mm Flobert (24" smoothbore), which can be used for pest control inside barns and farm buildings thanks to the low-powered cartridge. The rifle can also be accessorised with a hammer extension and a pistol grip with integrated cleaning kit and comes with a carry bag. Derek Edgar (MD) of Edgar Brothers, commented: "This lightweight, well balanced and compact .22LR is the perfect 'camp rifle' and its ambidextrous controls make it suitable for both left and right handers. Simple to use and striking in looks the Little Squirrel rifle has everything a hedgerow shooter could possibly want at a great price and is perfect for dispatching pests such as squirrels and small game such as rabbits."
MSRP: £181.50 in .22LR; £193.05 in 9mm Flobert
Visit: www.shootingsports.edgarbrothers.com

Chiappa's Little Squirrel an unusual yet useful camp gun in either 22 LR or 9mm Flobert/shotgun

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The Competitive Edge!

Pete Moore goes back to his PSG roots as he considers the latest hardware for the serious shooter

The old discipline of Practical Shotgun (PSG) as we first shot it in the early 1980s has changed considerably. Back then the majority of us did it for the fun of it and also the personal satisfaction of good and safe gun handling and improving our shooting skills. But as it grew so did the competitive element, which is always the way and serves to drive any sport/discipline forward. Given PSG and the newer spin off's of Action and Target Shotgun as well as 3-gun events that use a Practical-style gun for one of its elements then the equipment too will evolve.

TAKE THE TUBE

Though box mag guns have made an impression, it seems to me that the simple magazine extension tube, which was our only real modification to early PSG equipment, still reigns supreme. But nowadays it seems they get bigger and bigger. Equally the more practical-minded shooters and builders have taken a look at the semi-auto shotgun and seen ways where they can shave fractions of a second off reloading and also improve controls for easier and faster operation. We see this everywhere and you just have to look at the popular and growing airgun discipline of Hunter Field Target as the people who want to win have it seems brought Field Target-style equipment to do the job.

With this in mind let's look at the subject of this gun test - the IRON Armi Competition! To my eyes it seems to be more shooting machine than weapon, which is no bad things these days! It's not the sort of shotgun you could miss, as it's bright blue with a capital B, which is counterpointed by the black synthetic furniture. Everyone who has seen the gun said they hated the colour!

The gun is made in Italy by IRON Armi who make a number of semi-auto shotguns for clay and game shooting plus personal defence. The Competition is an off shoot of their Aries defence gun but aimed at what the company describe as dynamic shooting, which is I suppose 21st Century lingo for Practical or Action events.

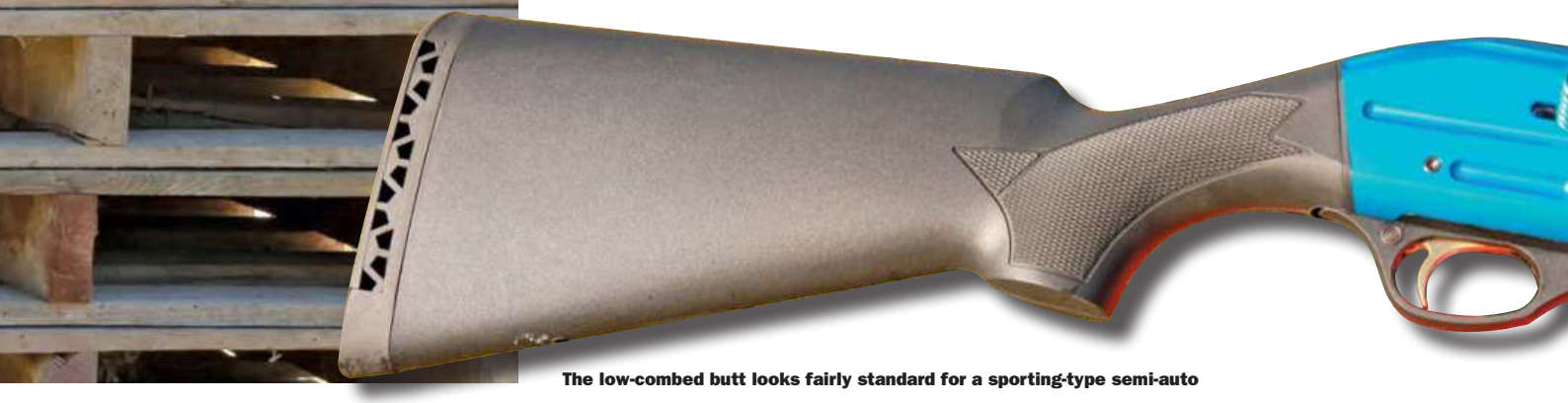
SOUND AND FAMILIAR

Blue finish and the rest of the go faster/shoot longer bits aside the Competition is just another gas/piston design, something the Italians seem to be very good at building! Operation is by a floating piston that sits

The IRON Armi Competition; yes it's blue but it shoots and functions 100%. Is this your idea of a Practical gun?

Detail of the Toni System rib complete with fibre optic iron sights

The gas/piston operating system is self-regulating and proved reliable over a range of ammo



The low-combed butt looks fairly standard for a sporting-type semi-auto

inside the gas shroud; behind it is a sliding spacer that imparts the blow to the operating rod slide, which connects to the bolt by rods. The mechanism is self-regulating so takes as much gas as is required to reload and vents the rest, meaning it should be ammo-friendly across the board!

So with a sound and reliable mechanism; which as I discovered it is, things start to get pretty funky! Two aspects of the design immediately stand out – 1 the massive muzzle brake (V-4 Compensator) and – 2 the huge magazine extension. The full name of the Competition includes the nomenclature 12/76, which alludes to the calibre (12-bore) and the use of 76mm (3" cartridges). I was running the gun on 70mm 32-gram game loads and I could get 13-shells up the pipe plus one in the chamber; impressive.

TONI WHO?

Unlike your average semi-auto the Competition has a very different sort of top rib over the familiar ventilated types we see every day. Designed by a company called Toni Systems who supply what they call a barrel bridge pointing system. This consists of a large rib that just makes contact at three positions on the barrel. Up front is a red, fibre optic and in the middle a U-notch style rear sight with twin green fibre rods one either side of the notch, which is elevation adjustable being fitted to an angled dovetail. I would imagine that this is primarily for slug shooting, though I would think the front dot makes a useful pin sight too!

Moving back we get to the heart of the gun - the action. The receiver is made of Ergal a high strength aluminium alloy and shows sections of material machined away to lose weight. It does not look like much has been removed but given the size of the gun it is no dead weight either! What I did like was the sides of the loading port are cut away at an angle so giving a bit more access for thumbing the ammo in. The shell lifter is solid and I thought they might have slotted it to save a bit more weight. This can also be useful if you get a round jump back so making it easier to clear.

BIGGER, LONGER; SMALLER!

One aspect of sporting semi-autos are their generally small controls; the cocking handle is usually a small hook and the bolt release is not massive! In a discipline that requires speed shooting and reloading size does matter and IRON Armi have got it 60% right! ▶

Detail of extended cocking handle and bolt release, which are useful, but why no big head safety?

Note the angled open access sides to the loading port, here we can also see the extended controls in perspective

Wow; that's one serious looking muzzle brake, note the long mag tube to which I fitted a fig-8 clamp for added stability

The round/chequered cocking handle is huge giving plenty to get hold of! Equally the bolt release latch is a large rectangular plate forward and right of the ejection port, which is checked to provide a non-slip surface. So why didn't they go the whole way and fit an extended safety catch to the standard cross-bolt? Moving with a loaded gun between targets in this action discipline requires the safety to be ON and then quickly taken OFF prior to shooting so why not make it big and easy to manipulate?

The top of the receiver shows four cut-outs (two per side) that will accept scope rings for optics; this seems to be a very common feature on most European semi-autos. Probably because they use them for boar shooting with slug. The black polymer furniture is basic with a long gripped, low-combed butt with what is called a Pillow Recoil system; for that read thick, ventilated recoil pad. The forend is as you might except, though both items shows aggressive, cast-in chequering panels in all the right places!

TUBE AND PORTS

Moving forward to the two most distinctive features; the 12-shot mag tube extends about two inches in front of the V-4 Compensator. This looks a bit odd, but from what I have heard from some shooters the advantage is that this extra bit acts like a resting bar and would be of use on barricade stages perhaps? However, like the safety catch IRON Armi have missed a trick as the gun does not come with a barrel-to-magazine stabilising clamp. Given the length of the unsupported mag tube it's certainly in danger of getting banged out of alignment if you inadvertently bash the tube against something. Not hard either as the gun is a whopping 52" long and I could not find a bag to fit it, so had to remove the mag tube for transit!

The barrel on this example is 27" long and the 4-port muzzle brake is hard to miss. The gun comes with six multi-chokes as standard, so you can tailor it to the cartridge being used. You have to take the brake off to do the job though! A choke key is included along with some shims to adjust the butt angle.

SLICK PERFORMER

Overall and with the caveats of the small safety and the lack of barrel clamp; of the two I can live with the former but not the latter, the Competition is very much a top end gun built for purpose. I ran the gun on two loads - a 70mm, 32-gram #5 game cartridge and a 70mm, 28-gram, #8 clay round. Both cycled reliably proving the operating system's design and ability admirably.

The game load is quite snotty in my 26" Browning Maxus and not that much better in the IRON Armi. With this one felt recoil is most noticeable; especially over a longer string of shots. Though the brake did tend to keep the muzzle down a bit, which proved useful on standard exercise type, multiple target scenarios.

Loading the magazine to capacity is easy with little to no stacking of the spring as it gains tension. Equally the relieved/angled sides of the loading port are of benefit. At £1500 the Competition is expensive when compared to guns like the Mossberg 12b JM Pro Series Tactical Class 24" 10-Shot, which is £729.95 and also comes with all the go faster bits including magazine clamp. Or a Remington 11-87 is around £800 and only requires a mag extension to be practical! However, I can see the IRON Armi appealing to shooters who want it all from the box and I have to say it pretty much does just that; beauty is in the eye of the beholder...

The Competition in all its glory, with a 27" barrel muzzle brake and extended mag tube it measures 52" front to back

FOR
PSG ready from the box
Reliable with a great capacity

AGAINST
It's blue
Needs a magazine/barrel clamp

VERDICT
Not cheap
Offers that competitive edge

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Name	IRON Armi Competition 12/76
Type	semi-auto shotgun
Calibre	12-bore
Capacity	12 + 1
Mechanism	gas/pistol, self-regulating
Barrel	27" multi-choke
	6 chokes and key included
Muzzle brake	Y
Hi-vis sights fitted	Y
Price	£1550
Contact	York Guns Ltd, 01904 487180
	www.yorkguns.com

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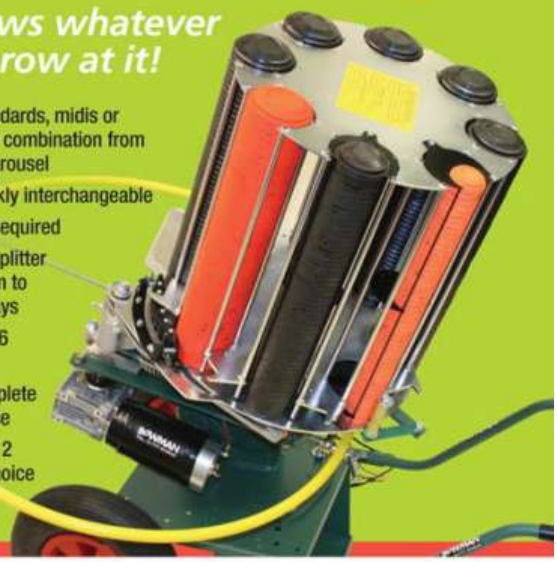

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Bulk Storage

Jules Whicker putts all his eggs in two baskets as he tells us about the gun safe he decided upon

I got my first shotgun in my early teens, and my first cabinet. As my arsenal grew, so did the line of cabinets bolted to the wall. A very miss-matched selection too, which made finding the gun I wanted at the time a case of hide & seek! Things had to change, and that meant finding a really big cabinet… or maybe even two! Investigation showed choice was good but I didn't see what I was looking for: everything seemed either too Spartan or beyond my budget. The lesson I took away was just how much one could spend on such a project.

DO THE MATH

The other consideration was size. Cabinets are typically described as to how many guns the manufacturers think they can hold – 5 or 10 etc. In some cases this seems to be for skinny and un-scoped equipment rather than a modern clay gun or scoped rifle, let alone any tactical/precision hardware. I reckoned I'd have to take 1/3 to 1/2 off the advertised capacity when calculating what I needed. Then I came across the Buffalo River Black Diamond gun safes. With an SRP of around £930 for a 24-gun model –not cheap, but still several hundred pounds less than others I had seen. The price was attractive, as were the smart black finish, silver logo and chromed 3–spoke door handle.

The interior is fully-lined with grey carpet and complete with a lockable top compartment with a removable shelf alongside it. Two x 12-bay U-shaped gun racks, and a pair of removable/adjustable shelves for converting one side of the cabinet for storing ammunition, optics or other items completed the storage. Most importantly, the safe locked up with 10 massive chromed bolts and an electric key pad: so no more big bunches of keys to fumble through!

So far so good, but even the 24-gun model would clearly not be enough, as its real-world capacity looked to be about 16-20. Never mind: its external dimensions occupied exactly half the wall area of what I had so there was room for two!

GETTING THEM IN

A bit of internet browsing and a few phone enquiries later and I had agreed a great combined price with Robin at EMA Custom Rifles, who promised to have UK distributors Highland Outdoors send them direct to me from their warehouse just as soon as they had them in stock.

Safes are pre-drilled for the anchor bolts supplied, but you do have to make holes in the lining for them to pass through. After that it was just a matter of drilling the wall and floor, spinning the bolts tight, capping them with the protective nylon covers provided, and informing my local Firearms Licensing Team of the change.

SWINGS AND ROUNDABOUTS

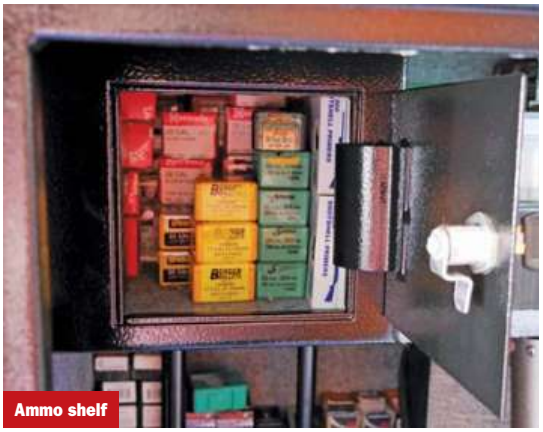
As I moved my guns in I realised two things; first, although there was room for 10 shotguns each side of the central divider, I could only fit 6-8 scoped rifles per-side; secondly that there was more room left over for gear than I had expected. The back of the gun-rack was wide enough for powder canisters and boxes of rimfire ammo; the top shelf took all my centrefire ammo; and the lockable compartments in each cabinet swallowed up my bullets and my sound moderators.

It's always true that you can get more into a cabinet by packing guns in like sardines; but I wanted room for future additions. So I was glad that I had over-budgeted for space, buying a notional 48-guns' worth of capacity to house just half that number. If you do want to maximise capacity, however, I'd recommend removing all the shelves from the main storage area and using the Rifle Rod system (available from Brownells UK).

Another good feature is that if you don't require the full capacity for long arms, you can install the two extra shelves provided using the configurable ladder-type support system

Smart and stylish and a lot better than a miss-matched collection of smaller gun boxes

Detail of middle shelf gun racks, there's enough room to store items like powder at the rear as can be seen



Ammo shelf

present on both sides of the main storage area. There's also some hidden space under the floor: perfect for documents and small valuables.

EASY ACCESS

The digital keypad was easy to set up. Depressing a small latch underneath lets you rotate and remove the housing to install the 9V PP3 battery supplied. With the housing back in place, it's time to activate a red button located inside the door near the hinge and then enter your chosen 3-8 digit code. Then, after testing your code a couple of times with the door open, you can secure the safe with confidence.

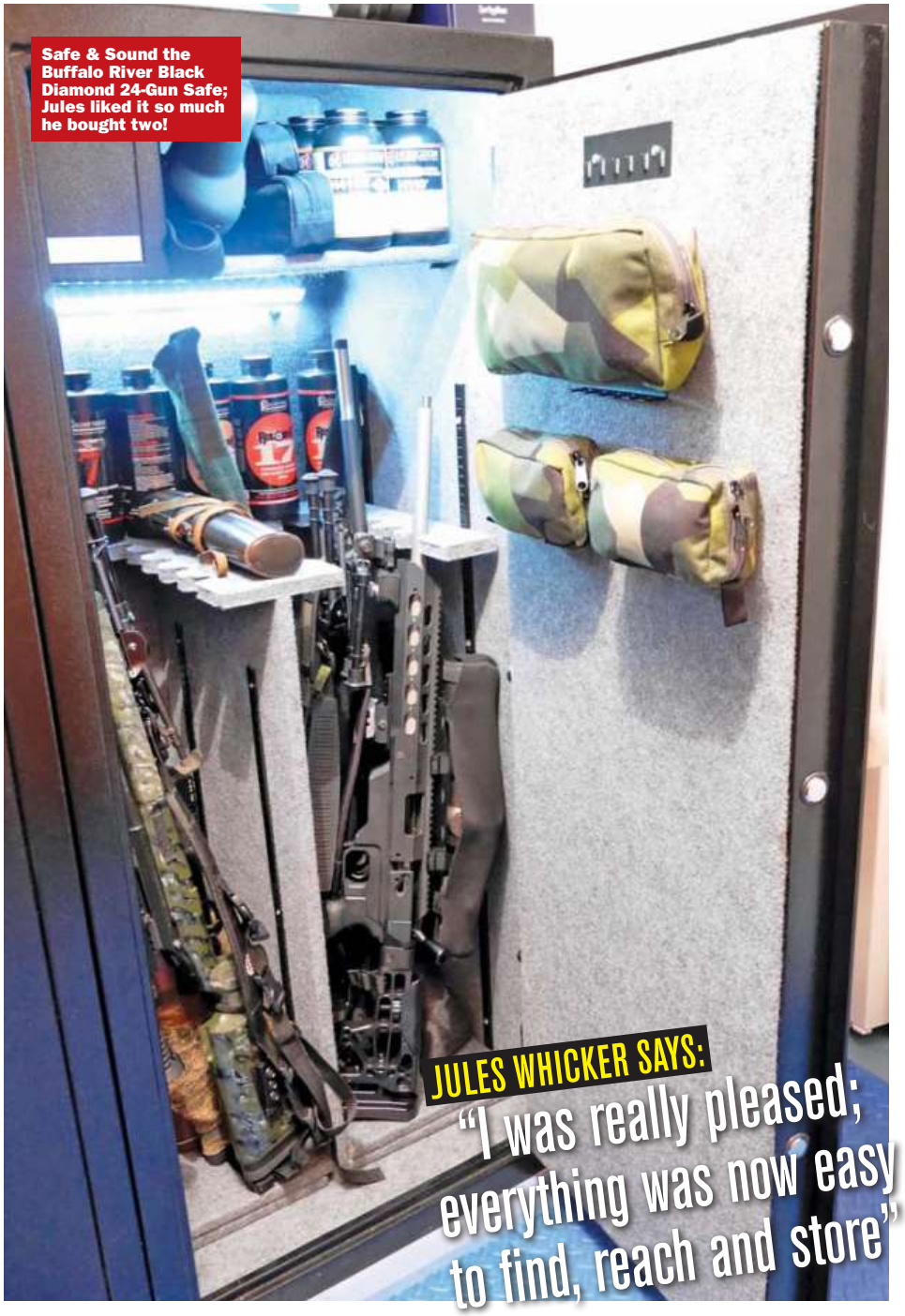
To access; punch your number into the keypad and hit the # key. Each time you enter a number, an amber LED will light up and you'll hear a bleep, and after entering # a green LED and a triple bleep confirms the code was correct and the three-spoked handle is free to move. Turn it clockwise to unlock the door. If you get a red LED when you press a key it means the battery needs replacing. Fortunately the safe remembers your access code, so you won't have to re-programme it afterwards. If you enter the wrong code three times in a row, you have to wait 20 seconds before you can try again. Fail again, and it's a 5 minute delay. Buffalo River supply a 'trouble key' (plus spare) that lets you unlock manually via a keyhole concealed behind the keypad housing.

I was really pleased; everything was now easy to find, reach and store, but even with the gun racks and shelves full it still seemed to me that there was a good deal of dead space, especially in the vertical plane, that I might do something with. For example, the backs of the doors are fitted with small hooks and a rack for cleaning rods. Now I was all set!

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

- **Name:** Buffalo River 24-Gun safe
- **Price:** £930
- **Contacts:**

Highland Outdoors Ltd; 0845 099 0252
EMA Custom Rifles Ltd; 07802 346202 or 07931 947566



Safe & Sound the Buffalo River Black Diamond 24-Gun Safe; Jules liked it so much he bought two!

JULES WHICKER SAYS:
"I was really pleased; everything was now easy to find, reach and store"

FOR
Well made with a good capacity

AGAINST
Quoted capacity might not quite live up to expectations

VERDICT
Well priced compared to the opposition
A serious piece of gun security

Integral strong box

Key pad detail

The rear of the door offers a number of storage possibilities too

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Design **Evolution**

Spyderco's compact fixed blade ARK is ready for anything

Some knives are born of a need and Spyderco's tiny and unique ARK (always ready knife) is such. Envisioned by John Shirley (US Army combat veteran) and helped by his friend Sam Owens; this compact design is intended to be worn around the neck for last ditch self defence. The reason - US service personal were being attacked when off duty on bases in Afghanistan by foreign nationals and also members of other coalition forces in shower facilities. The blade is made of H-1, a nitrogen-based alloy steel that's rust-proof and offers a clip point, 2", hollow-ground curved edge and a Bi-directional, fibreglass-reinforced nylon (FRN), non-slip handle. This fits into a square, injection-moulded polymer sheath that is suspended from the wearers neck by a ball chain, which will break away under too much pressure so can't be used to strangle them. Retention is by friction at the mouth and a quick pull deploys it for instant use. The ARK with sheath only weighs 2 oz and packs very flat so it's easy to carry and conceal. Certainly and unusual design and very collectable for Spyderco aficionados. Here in the UK it cannot be used for its intended purpose by sportsmen men and woman as carrying a knife in a public place as we know is restricted by law to sub-2" non-locking folders. But as an example of something that addresses a need and is made by such a respected company as Spyderco it's probably a 'must have' item for serious connoisseurs of the brand.

FOR
A unique and specific design

AGAINST
Not legal UK carry

VERDICT
An interesting addition to a Spyderco collection

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LOTS TO LOOK AT!

Country Sports Wholesale recently invited me down to an open day where they had a number of new products to look at. First up was the Rosler Titan range of rifles that they now import, which includes the Titan 3 and 6 and Mauser 66-like straight-pull Model 16. They are both well-made and represent good value for money. The Titan 3 is available in wood or synthetic stocks and blued or stainless finish. As well as sporter or thumbhole stock orientations CSW Ltd offer the guns as a package with Vortex scopes and mounts.

Titan uses a common long action specification to accommodate any cartridge overall length. So for 222 Rem to 6mm BR use the Titan 3, whilst 243 to 338 Win Mag are available in the Titan 6. They use a switch barrel system so calibres are interchangeable within the range; given the correct bolt head and magazine are used! This adds to the versatility and value.

SAUER-LIKE

The receiver is aluminium alloy which saves on weight and as the 3-lug bolt locks directly into the barrel so no problems on integrity! The receiver at the bottom front is split and clamps the barrel much like the Sauer 202 system. The bolt shows 3-lugs and offers a short lift angle along with a plunger-type ejector, both assuring smooth and slick operation. The detachable magazine shows twin, side-mounted plungers that when pressed in unison pop it from the rifle. The stock is a hard black plastic moulded unit with pressed in checkering at the forend and pistol grip. It's nicely contoured, ambidextrous and very slim in the forend section and with no cheek piece to the butt section.

The Titan 16 has a steel action and is finished in a hard wearing carbonitrided oxide. The bolt handle is right/forward and drops down to end in a ball and is simply pulled rearwards to disengage the 16, locking lugs. Other features such as detachable mag, stocks and interchangeable barrel are the same as Titan's Model 3 and 6!

STEINERT SUPER CHRONOGRAPH

The Steinert Sensing System acoustic chronograph is accurate in any lighting conditions which really caught my eye. It's different as it uses the shockwave made by the supersonic bullet passing over the sensor. Whether dark, light, rain, snow, indoors or out it works perfectly. The sensor area is 300 times larger than a similar sized optical chrono. This makes it easy to get velocity readings from close to the muzzle to any downrange distance as long as the bullet is supersonic. All self-contained with no leads it is instantly deployed and so easy to use although you have to move to the device to read the velocities as the readout is not visible from the shooting position.

NEOPOD ULTRA LIGHT BIPOD

Enter the NeoPod bipod that is made from a carbon fibre reinforced PEEK polymer which has a tensile strength equal to that of stainless steel yet half the weight of aluminium. It weighs only 82g (2.9oz) and is really light and barely noticeable on the rifle. PEEK is deceptive as it does look like any other plastic, but you try and break it! It mounts by a spigot system that allows a true QD ability also keeping the centre of gravity

Testing the Titan 16 straight-pull rifle; it shot well and showed a slick and fast action

Bruce Potts takes a trip to the country to look at a new range of products from a new importer

Almost the complete range of Vortex scopes were on show and to test. A diverse range and a scope brand gaining real respect here in the UK

Titan 3 in .223 and synthetic stock was also a sweet shooter and good value rifle

closer to the barrel. The various adapters weigh from to 7g to 31g.

The legs are hinged level with the central spigot for maximum stability and the universal sling swivel stud adapter places the spigot just 8mm below the forearm. Various adapters are available for different rifles; legs fold flat and are deployed by pulling forward and flipping open. It offers pivot and also cant, so can handle any sort of ground or target type. Legs are deployed by a button and are pre-notched to set height with solid rubber feet. The NeoPod adapters attach without tools to standard Recknagel (6mm) and Uncle Mike (8mm) sling swivels studs, push button horizontal (e.g. Sauer) or vertical and Picatinny.

TG-XS SOUND MODERATOR

The TG-xs is primarily a lightweight sound moderator for rimfire use but also works on air rifles too. Made from A6063T6 aluminium it's tough and weighs only 60g and measures 122 x 21mm and consists of two parts. The outer shroud is a threaded tube available in either black or silver with a knurled muzzle end that when turned releases the inner, one-piece baffle stack. This keeps things simple and makes cleaning even easier. The design is very much like the old SAK or later A-TEC Wave moderators. Db level reduction is quoted at 20 Db with sub-sonic ammo.

HEAR DEFENDERS-DF

Hear Defenders-DF are a revolutionary ear plug that are comfortable and functional. Available in three different sizes; small, medium and large. Dual filter works by a secondary filter on the outside edge that the sound hits first and then further reduced in the resonator chamber which causes the cancellation or dynamic frequencies. The muted sound now enters the inner or primary filter that removes any resonance within the ear canal; finally the reduced and modified sound is allowed to enter your ear canal in an undistorted yet highly reduced decibel level.

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KLINSKY

Klinsky Stocks offer a small product range at present catering for the Air Arms 200 air rifle and Titan 6, CZ455 Target style a laminated or standard black and even a Tikka T3 target. The Air Arms stock was very nice and the Monte Carlo Titan 6 unit had some very nice figuring and grain colour and was available in Sporter or Thumbhole design. They come bedded, finished, chequered with solid rubber recoil pad and an oiled finished. The target design was similarly excellent. On the Tikka T3 it transformed this model into a fine looking and great handling rifle, good for ▶

Vortex spotting scopes, binoculars and monoculars all on show

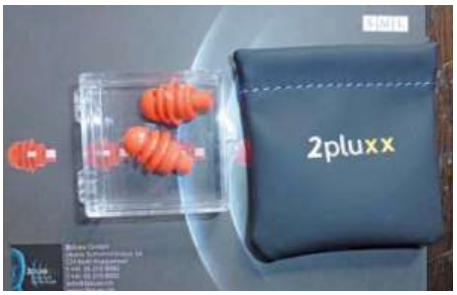
hunting as well as a spout of long range target shooting. This one has a deep, ventilated forend and straight pistol grip with a high adjustable cheek piece and adjustable recoil pad. Made from beech it is sans checkering but handles really nicely. More inlets hopefully will follow and prices are very keen!

VORTEX SCOPES

Also on show was a really good array of Vortex optics - both Binoculars and Scopes. The brand has built a good reputation in this country for high quality, wide choice of designs and for good value. Plus it's got a no quibble replacement policy too.

Scope choice ranges from the cost effective Cross Fire range including the Hog Hunter 3-12x56MOA to the 2-7x32mm right up to 6-24x50 AO models all with multi coated lenses and MOA turrets. The Diamondback range ups the game to extra low dispersion lenses, Argon gas filled for fog proof viewing whilst the Viper has all these features plus Armotec protected exterior lens surfaces.

These are sporting scopes with standard turrets however the Premium models such as the Viper HST, Viper PST, Razor HD and Razor HD Gen 2 offer zero stop tactical turrets, 30mm tubes, excellent reticule choice, illuminated reticules and superbly sharp, clear optics.



Hera Defenders-DF hearing protection, double filtered for better noise reduction

Similarly binoculars follow the same degree of diversity, from monocular to compacts, mid-range stalking binos to high end low light bins that rival even the big names at a fraction of the cost. The range is too vast to list them all but CSW Ltd - who are now part of Vortex's UK dealer network - have comprehensive catalogues that detail all the individual features. The Vortex Viper HD spotting scope was very good, the 15-45x65mm model offering a good mag range and sharp images. Similarly their Diamondback 8x42mm binos again handled very well, offered really good clear optics and great value.

Steinert Super Chrono, acoustic not light beam chronograph. I bought one - enough said!

TG-xs sound moderator was a simple yet effective two piece rimfire/airgun can

Klinsky stocks, good wood, style and bedding - what`s not to like?

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Short 'n' Sweet!

Pete Moore checks out a pair of lower power compact variables and sees they offer a lot

Compact scopes do have their place in the shooting world and Konus offers a 1-4x24 and 1.5-6x44 illuminated and they are a bit of all right!

Illumination offers blue and red options

Size/ weight-wise there's not a lot of difference in the two scopes

As a hunter as well as a practical-type rifleman I have always liked lower power optics. OK you don't get the high end mag that allows you to reach out to extreme distance, but what you get do get is a scope that can be used from close to medium ranges. I used to have a Schmidt & Bender 1-4x24 on my Remy 700 and have made good kills out to 250/300 yards. Be it for driven game, woodland hunting or action-orientated shooting, the wide field of view and ease of unsupported use really pays dividends. These days manufacturers are cramming more magnification range into their smaller optics with specs of x1-8 or 1.7 – 10, but the rule of thumb still seems to rest on two specifications x1-4 and x1.5-6 with objectives of between 24 and 44mm.

MATCHED PAIR

What I have here are two compacts from Konus; the M30 1-4x24 and 1.5-6x44, in essence they are the same build with the exceptions of the larger objective and higher magnification range on the 1.5-6 and click values. Common features include a glass-etched, 2nd focal plane, Dual-X/30-30 reticule, water, fog and shock-proof and fully multi-coated optics.

The build shows a 30mm, one-piece body tube in matt black finish with a lock ring focus and a large slotted magnification ring with gold numbers. Turrets are medium-height hunter types under screw off caps. To the left of the large saddle is a drum-type rheostat split in blue and red illumination

with five increments in each colour, a coin-type battery (included) sits under the cover cap. Flip-up lens caps come as standard along with a cleaning cloth and Allan key for zeroing the turrets.

SPEC

The reticule though using the common Dual-X or 30/30 pattern – four, thick outer bars at 12, 3, 6 and 9 o'clock with a fine inner cross hair shows an open centre with a free-floating dot. I'm not usually a fan of this feature as at longer ranges and when zeroing it can cover too much of the target. But on shorter range optics like these two it's not such an issue. When illuminated however only the dot lights up so making an ideal aim point for close range fast reaction shooting.

Click values differ with the 1-4x24 having ½" @ 100 yards. The drum is well marked on top with a double-ended arrow with R and L at either end. You get 15 divisions sub-divided into four so for every major division you shift the point of impact 2" @ 100 yards. This translates into 30" per turn and five full rotations top to bottom - 150" full spread. The turrets shows two small Allan screws in the rim so you can re-set them to zero if required, for 'set & forget' drums the feel is positive and they are easy to dial without being too easy to turn, so counting the clicks is easy! For some unknown reason the windage turret offers six full turns, which would be better in elevation! It however splits its markings with 0 in the middle going out to 7 on either side, making dialling into wind just that bit easier!

TOO MUCH WINDAGE

The 1.5-6x44 follows the same turret build though offers ¼" clicks and the same 15-divisons sub-divided into fours. Meaning 15" per turn though with eight full rotations in elevation (120") and again a confusing 10 in windage, in this plane the drum is split with seven divisions in either direction. Despite the windage drums being higher in correction there's a good bit of movement in both planes and I somehow doubt you'll run out of movement on either model!

I am not a fan of multiple colour illuminated reticules and feel that red is the best and prefer a larger adjustment range over less with a choice of colours. As with many scopes in this class the illumination on these Konus scopes is slightly off to one side. In both cases the colour loses its intensity between 9 and 12 'clock. But for what I would use a lit reticule for, which is close range it's well up to the job!

The difference in objective sizes are obvious, with the 44mm letting in more light, scopes come with flip-up caps as standard

> "Image quality is good and the glass-etched reticule crisp and sharp"

The extra mag of the 1.5-6x42 uses ¼" clicks which give just that bit more precision

The 1-4x24 offers ½" clicks, which suits its closer range specification

YOU CHOOSE

Image quality is good and the glass-etched reticule crisp and sharp, plus the arms are not too thick though you still get a good contrast between the inner and outer elements. Of the two the 1-4x24 is perhaps just that bit more specialised but is super short and compact. However, the 1.5-6x42 is perhaps the more all-round design, with the extra x2 top end magnification allowing you to push the range a little more. Plus the bottom end of x1.5 is still very useful at shorter ranges and is not that bigger or heavier than the 1-4. Equally the 42mm objective will let in a bit more light over the 24, which is never a bad thing. As always with Konus products prices are keen and quality good.

FOR
Well made and well priced compacts
Good value for money

AGAINST
No alternative reticule options

VERDICT
Two useful scopes for many tasks

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Name	Konus M30 1-4x24 (#7284)	Konus M30 1.5-6x44 (#7285)
30mm body tube	Y	Y
Reticule Dual-X 30/30	Y	Y
Illumination	Y	Y red/blue
FOV	100-25 ft	64 - 17 ft
Weight	17.6oz	23.2oz
Length	10.8"	12.2"
Exit pupil	12 - 6 mm	18 - 7.3mm
Clicks	½"	¼"
Clicks per turn	150	150
Full turns	5E/6W	8E/10 W
Prices	£170	£219.95
Contact	LGA Supplies, 01904 608365 www.lgasupplies.com	

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Second **Skin**

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FOR
Great light weight shooting glove

AGAINST
Not a lot

VERDICT
One of the most versatile shooting gloves around

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NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION

Lucy King reports back from the NRA Practical Shotgun League, Shield Summer Challenge 2015 **(PHOTOGRAPHY BY: TWEED MEDIA)**

James Harris on the move at the NRA Practical Shotgun League, Shield Summer Challenge 2015. PSG is one of the most exciting and demanding action shooting disciplines

The New Bang 'n' Clang!

Practical shotgun (PSG) has a relatively low profile in the UK at the moment, but James Harris, director of a new nationwide league run by the National Rifle Association of the UK (NRA), is looking to change that.

The sport has been around for a while, but now it has real potential to increase its appeal thanks to solid organizational and promotional support from the NRA. It also has the benefit of additional incentives to compete in the form of prizes donated by headline sponsors Edgar Brothers and Beretta. From what I saw at a recent meeting, however, perhaps the league's biggest chance of success comes from its atmosphere: it's highly charged, and mentally challenging, but still manages to be fun and friendly.

WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT?

Unlike hunting or clays in more common shotgun sports, most of the targets in PSG are static. It is the shooter who moves, and does so as quickly as they can. The targets are not generally that far away – often not much further than the minimum of five yards. In theory, they're much easier to hit than, say, a fast crossing clay 40 yards away. But that's the easy part!

Competitors have to remember where all the targets are – there can be more than 20 per stage, often partially hidden by obstacles such as tyres or trees. There are also penalty targets (no-shoots) placed in strategic spots and any shooter who knocks one down loses points. There are also physical challenges: crawling through tunnels, shooting from bridges, under archways or around screens. In addition, some targets must be shot with specific loads. Most require birdshot, which is, broadly speaking 'normal' clay or game cartridges with shot sizes up to #5, and with loads usually up to 32-gram, but there's also 00 buckshot, and slug.

The most difficult obstacle to overcome, however, is the clock. Every second matters, and as each one passes, the pressure increases, and, as it does, everything else gets harder.

THE NRA LEAGUE

The NRA Shotgun League was launched in February this year during the NRA's Shotgun Festival at Bisley. Regular meetings are scheduled at a number of venues throughout the year and publicised online via the NRA's website and social media streams, making it easier for potential participants to get involved.

Sponsorship has also given the league a welcome boost. Support from the UK's largest wholesaler of firearms and ammunition, Edgar Brothers, has brought the league additional airtime on social media and in print, and given an extra incentive to join in in the form of prizes. On offer this year from Edgars are: a Hatsan Raider 12-gauge 24" semi-automatic worth £652 and FieldHunter 12-gauge 28" pump-action synthetic shotguns, worth £418; and five Hoppe's Legend Cleaning Kits, worth £27 each.

In order to give everyone, especially newcomers a reasonable chance of winning a prize, all league participants will be entered into a draw for them at the end of the season.

Edgar Brothers' Managing Director Derek Edgar said: "We are extremely pleased to be able to sponsor the new Shotgun League which is a great initiative from the NRA. New ideas and new ventures in shooting sports are always welcome and I am sure the Shotgun League will be a great success and go from strength to strength. The popularity of the Hatsan Escort has seen it become the

biggest selling semi-auto in the UK. The sheer size of the range meant it was a natural progression for Hatsan to enter the PSG market. With our help they produced a model for the UK market and have recently offered an increased magazine capacity to 9+1 (also available in 7+1). Not a company to rest on its laurels we are about to release the new Escort Raider which will offer practical shotgun shooters another option."

THE SUMMER CHALLENGE

I caught up with some of the league's participants during its Summer Challenge meeting, which ran over the weekend of 6 and 7 June at the Shield Shooting Centre, near Dorchester, on the Dorset coast.

Run by Steve Pike, Shield is the UK's only practical range that's open seven days a week. Built by Steve and his father, it makes good use of the naturally steep contours to provide safe backstops for a permanent suite of 10 ranges suitable for shotguns and pistol calibre firearms. For the Summer Challenge – a highlight in the practical shooting calendar - Steve had devised additional stages in the woods and fields above the permanent ranges.

As with clay shooting, competitors move around the different stands, or stages, in squads. I joined James's squad as they prepared for their first stage, just inside the woodland.

> "Seeing the targets fall is incredibly satisfying and I love the variety"

Orange hi-viz netting marked the course boundaries, highlighting the areas in which the shooter was permitted to stand. The targets – oblong steel plates mounted at ground level – were split between different compartmentalised areas. There was no limit on the number of shots allowed, but more shots means more reloading time and consequently result in a lower score.

Suddenly, the conversation and jokes, which had been flowing freely, stopped as range officer Clive Gamlin brandished his clipboard and explained the stage rules and permitted safety angles. Smiles gave way to expressions of intense concentration as the competitors made the most of their allotted 5 minutes to walk the course, counting targets, calculating shots and pacing out distances. Then the shooting started: it was fast and a few furious words of frustration escaped the shooters' lips as they scrabbled to reload against the clock.

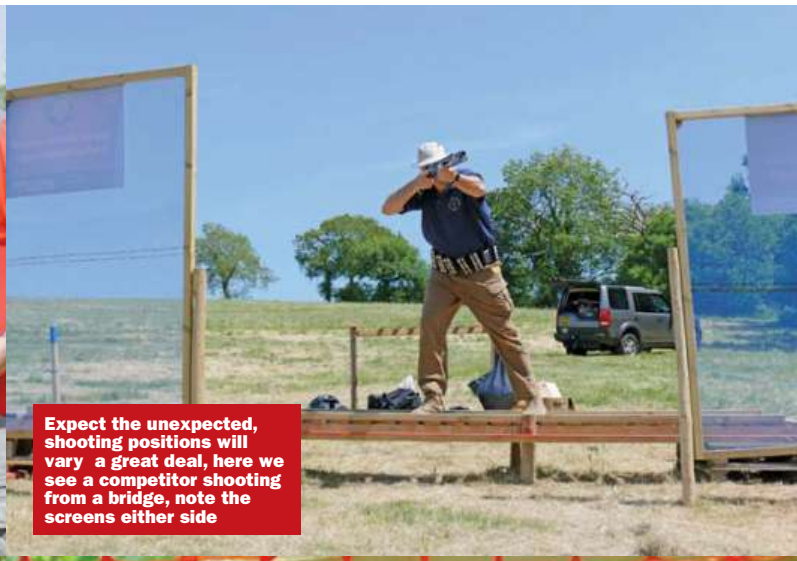
SAFETY FIRST

Seeing people running with loaded firearms is an unusual experience and would be mildly alarming (to say the least), were it not for the fact that 100% safety is clearly at the forefront of everyone's minds.

The NRA's target shooters are known as sticklers for safety procedures, and the Shotgun League is no different. Participants paid meticulous attention to safety angles and muzzles were always facing in a safe direction away from the spectators. This entailed a fair amount of running and walking sideways and other ways, and added yet another level of complexity to proceedings.

As she recovered from the adrenaline rush of her round, I asked one of the newer shooters what had drawn her into the sport. 'It was the excitement and the atmosphere,' she explained. 'I already do a few different types of shooting, but as soon as I was introduced to this, I was hooked. Seeing the targets fall is incredibly satisfying and I love the variety: some stages you even shoot coming down a slide, or from a swing! The only downside is that, not being able to shoot with a Section 1 shotgun yet, I'm always one of the slowest. But I'm getting faster, and the application for a Section 1 is in.'

Jon Holloway counting buckshot and birdshot, fast reloads and getting the round count/type right is essential



Expect the unexpected, shooting positions will vary a great deal, here we see a competitor shooting from a bridge, note the screens either side

Gun types and Classes vary but semi-autos seem to be the thing; here we see the new Browning A5 Auto

Under the arch, note the specialized loading belt employed by this shooter

WHAT YOU NEED TO GET STARTED...

The NRA's James Harris has the following tips to start you off:

GUN: This depends on division and funds available – make sure you have enough left for ammunition to practice with. For Open class a box magazine is practically a must: the new Escort Raider from Hatsan (RRP £652) should be of interest as well as the Bora Barak BR99 (from around £499) and Saiga-12 (from around £[999]). For Standard Auto most people choose a Benelli M2 (RRP from £1,100) or Beretta 1301 (RRP from £1,110). In Standard manual, it's either a Benelli Nova/ Super Nova (RRP from £625/£700) or Hatsan Escort

AMMUNITION BELT: The simple break free Prodec belt is a good starting point, prices should be no more than £50 including P&P. From there it's a choice of Shell caddies at about £20 each (you will need 7 at least) or load two/four belts that can cost up to £300 to fully set up.

LEGAL: Firearms certificate: to compete seriously, you need a Section 1 shotgun. Legally, it's not possible for anyone who doesn't have a licence for a Section 1 shotgun to shoot with one; even borrowing one in the presence of its owner is forbidden. Therefore many newcomers have to start with a three-shot gun (Section 2), and resign themselves to slower scores until the new licence or variation comes through. Participants also need to make sure they are adequately insured.

CONTACT:
James Harris at james.harris@nra.org.uk.

Paul Wood with a Mossberg JM Pro – a good out of the box gun for PSG!

Peter Matthews showing effects of adrenaline during a stage, PSG really gets you going!

Good to see the pump-action still has a place – Katia from the NRA with her trusty Remy 870 pumper!

PSG has an enviable safety record, shooters are always accompanied by a qualified RO

Peter Matthews shoots through a window with a Benelli M2 Practical; another popular choice for PSG

Bird, buck and rifled slug are all used in PSG for different targets and on appropriate ranges

Box mag guns are getting more popular, but magazines are big and they need a secure belt to stow them

Unusual but doubtless effective – John Holloway reloading his Benelli Super Nova pump

Another recent convert in the squad, was Lee Bowditch. Though new to the practical world, Lee is no stranger to a shotgun, having previously represented England at Skeet. There days, he works as a photojournalist. He was taking pictures of the league's launch at Bisley on 14 February this year, and, appropriately given the date, came away smitten with the sport and signed up as a competitor. What hooked him was the combination of an exciting, mentally challenging sport, with the fact that everyone involved was clearly having such a good time.

Sneaky; red no-shoot plate with shoot clay high left; you have to get one without the other or it's a penalty!

SECOND STAGE

Lee's Skeet skills stood him in good stead during the squad's second stage, which was shot from a stationary standing position and involved a few clays. On their own, the clays would have made easy targets to most regular clay shots. They were not on their own, however, they were behind a row of four 'pepper popper' targets. The shooters had to hit the pepper pots, making them fall onto see-saw-type constructions and sending clays flying into the air. To post a competitive time, competitors had to knock down all four poppers first, then deal with all four clays, which would be rapidly falling away. The fastest shots posting times of just over five seconds.

The third stage was also shot from a stationary firing point. The eight steel targets here were also static and were relatively close and had to be shot through a low archway, leaving the shooter no option but to get down on the ground. The combination of bright June sunlight and thick foliage created a patchwork of light and dark that made it hard to keep track of all the targets.

For the fourth stage, the squad was allowed back on its feet to deal with 22 static steel plates, half-hidden under the trees, on the edge of ditches and behind tyres. Shooters were allowed to move, but were limited to a roped-off shooting area and angles of fire were limited by large screens. Having to spot and count targets and reload, all while on the move was no mean feat and provoked some misses and wry smiles on the faces of even the most experienced.

The fifth stage was shot over a larger area in open fields. It comprised a mixture of static paper, steel and clay targets at a variety of distances from the shooter, who was allowed to move around inside a roped-off area and along a wooden bridge.

Ammunition choice was now an issue: hits on the paper targets only counted if scored with buckshot; the steel targets could sometimes be knocked down with birdshot, but the lighter pellets often lacked the punch to topple the plates; and it would be very difficult to break the clays without the tight pattern of birdshot. Brains hummed as competitors deliberated over which loads to put where, and tried to remember what loads they had left mid-stage.

The afternoon's layouts, on Shield's permanent ranges, were more compact but still demanded a high level of mental agility and a few physical contortions from the competitors. There were tunnels, narrow apertures and penalty targets to negotiate, plus a stage on which only solid slug ammunition was allowed. By the time the final shots had been fired, the shadows were stretching and brains and bodies were looking forward to a break and a cold beer.

The Summer Challenge is a two-day event and the following day a fresh batch of competitors were being put through their paces. In the final reckoning, the winners were:

Standard Auto (semi-auto shotgun with no optical sights or box magazines)

Position	Name	Grade %
1	Mike Darby	100
2	Mark Sienesi	99.1
3	Jon Axe	95.43

Manual (pump action with no optical sights or box magazines)

Position	Name	Grade %
1	Iain Guy	100
2	Mick Flatley	93.05
3	John Holloway	92.67

Open (any shotgun with any sights and any magazine type)

Position	Name	Grade %
1	Richard Ingram	100
2	Mike Harvey	80.62
3	John Thorne	79.07

RETURN FIRE

The HW80 has earned its reputation as a formidable hunter, but the woodwork is rather bland

TAKING STOCK

LETTER OF THE MONTH

I own several airguns, and have always favoured spring-powered models over pneumatics for a variety of reasons. Being a bit of a traditionalist means I just feel happy with a rifle that recoils and does what it says on the tin, as they say! My best rifle is a Weihrauch HW80, which I genuinely wouldn't swap for anything. Mine will group inside an inch at 35yds from a variety of positions out in the field, when I do my bit, and it never lets me down. My question just relates to the woodwork. Just lately, I've fancied a change, and felt the factory standard beech stock is maybe a bit bland. I don't want to switch rifles, but wondered about the options regarding fitting a custom stock?
Steve Hopkins

Steve,
We share your sentiments about the HW80- it is indeed one of the classics, and it is surprising that Weihrauch themselves don't market custom versions of this landmark sporter. Fear not though, as help isn't far away. Several small outfits can produce bespoke custom designs, although these will attract a premium. We would suggest as a first stop, looking up the Sheffield-based company that goes under the name 'Custom Stock', as they have been in the business for a good few years. They've really upped their game of late too, with a recently revamped line-up of styles. All their stocks are produced specifically for airguns, fashioned from American Walnut, and can transform the handling and looks of your old favourite. The '80 will feel like a new gun, but with all that reliability and performance you're familiar with. Give them a ring on 0114 2472947, or better still, take a look at their full range of stocks at www.customstock.co.uk.

TRUE LIES

I have been reading up about truing AR15 receivers and how much it can improve performance, do you know what they do and if it works.
B Smail

AR15 receiver truing rig, it's a simple enough job just take it easy...

Hi Mr Smail
To a degree yes. The only real place where you can make a difference is at the front of the threaded barrel extension in the upper receiver. If the front face is not flush with the barrel ring that butts up to it when the barrel nut is tightened in theory it could pull the barrel out of true. Infinitesimal maybe but if it's not concentric then there' the possibility of error and wider shot dispersion. A tool which consists of a ground steel bar with a raised face is covered in various grades of grinding paste and pushed into the receiver body so the face contacts the front of the barrel extension then it's rotated to true up that forward bearing surface. Neal Parnham (Suffolk Rifle) has one and he tuned up my AR, which on inspection was a tad off. You need to be careful as if you take off too much material you will allow the barrel to sit too far back into the action, which might cause the bolt lugs to bind or not lock properly.

HOW FAR?

Excellent Sept issue; one for Wheelwrite regarding the bullet drop story (pp111) often recounted in the pub by physics students who usually confuse the matter by inferring that the bullet is fired from a rifle vertically as opposed to dropped from the muzzle. Newton states that forces have no perpendicular effect so a dropped bullet from the muzzle of a weapon will hit the ground at 9.81 m/sec squared and the bullet fired from the same rifle (horizontal) to the earth will hit the ground at the same time. But, if I was lucky enough to fire a .50 cal round at Lydd ranges at a target say 2000 m away would the bullet not hit the ground after I had dropped the one from the muzzle at the same time? Or would this be something to do with elevation?
Richard Watt

High Richard
Your proposed 2km test is unfortunately flawed. The .50 cal projectile would not achieve the proposed 2km range unless your firing point was elevated a considerable distance above the mean ground level since the tandem 'drop' must start at the same point, i.e., the muzzle. For the experiment to work the barrel would have to be aligned (parallel) with the 'circumference' of the earth, free from any introduced trajectory. (In your test case, bore sighted to the same height above the ground at a range of 2km). Furthermore, the terrain at the point of bullet impact has to be at exactly the same elevation (ASL) as the ground beneath the muzzle. Ergo, at ground level, say a barrel on a bipod, you would only have a few centimetres of drop available... insufficient for your test. My guess would be that with the muzzle 15cm above the ground, your 750gn Lapua .510 bullet would strike the terrain at a range of under 250m. Interpolated, that gives a launch height of over 50 metres to achieve ground impact at 2km. Raising the muzzle to introduce trajectory negates all the calculations for that portion of drop time caused exclusively by gravity.
Right, that's the simple answer. However, the actual result of this practical experiment would indeed produce dissimilar drop times due to a combination of effects resulting largely from the imparted spin of the rifling. As we know, the gyroscopic effects of the high rate of spin are trying to keep the bullet pointing in exactly the same direction in which it exited the muzzle, in divergent conflict with our friend gravity. The effect of this conflict induces dynamic 'flight', a form of lift that extends it's time in the air. We also have probable transonic effects at your 2km range. I'm not going to preach the maths... indeed, some of it is beyond my modest understanding, but the differing result would be mathematically demonstrable.
Wheelwrite

LIFE AFTER SMITH

Thanks to your advice, as I contacted you last year about getting a 22 semi-auto and followed your advice and got myself the S&W MP15-22 rifle. No problem with the functioning of the rifle and the AR15 like controls on it, however I would like to know if you could have any one semi auto .22lr practical military looking rifle would you still go for the MP15-22 or would you choose something else; if so what?
Thanks
Gavin Townsend

For a well priced rifle the Smith M&P 15-22 is a hard act to follow!

Hi Gavin
Glad you like the Smith; hmm that's a tricky question. In terms of reliability, shootability and sheer value for money there's nothing out there that touches the 15-22! It's not that pretty compared to a true M4 copy or the expensive custom jobs, but it has all the functioning controls and an easy fill mag. I have been toying with the idea for some time of adding the GSG StG44 to my collection, as I like what is a great copy of the first true assault rifle, however, it does have mag feed issues, which is a pity! I have also been thinking about getting a near exact M4 made with the original integral carry handle and rear sight etc, Suffolk Rifle has offered to build me such an animal with the drop-in automatic hold open insert, which is a must for me on an AR15-based rimfire. Truth is the Smith is still the better option due to the fact it can easily mount optics. I think if I were to change then I'd go for the JP22, which is a far cry from the military look-a-likes but is probably the most accurate 22 semi I have ever shot, but not cheap!
Guns also worth looking at in this class are the SIG522, Beretta ARX 160 and Suffolk Rifles' 22 AR. Guns I would stay away from Walther's Colt Tactical and HK416 series, they shoot well enough but are not easy to strip and clean and the ISSE Modern Sporting Rifle, it looks like the FN SCAR but is not reliable enough for my liking and has similar stripping cleaning issues to the Walther series as it uses a near identical bolt system.
Hope that helped?

Got a question or even a problem with your shooting or equipment, drop us a line and we'll do our best to sort it out at **peter.moore403@ntlworld.com**

Bottle-free BULLPUP!

Mark Camoccio test FX's Indy a slightly different design offering an on-gun pump as well as a cylinder

Different strokes – The FX Indy Bullpup PCP offers an integral pump as well as the ability to fill from a conventional bottle

Detail of the side lever and the manual safety catch; positioning of the former offers easy operation

A cover for the filler valve would be a good if not mandatory idea

"Of course much of the inspiration for the Indy comes from its full length stable mate, the Independence"

As the creative driving force behind Swedish brand, FX Airguns, Fredrik Axellson should be mightily proud. For his brainchild has evolved and developed as a 'major player' in cutting edge manufacturing over the years. OK; some of the models have seemed relatively pricey, but that hasn't stopped an army of enthusiasts, eager to invest in the company's unique approach. A combination of design flair and the latest production techniques has certainly helped build FX an enviable reputation, but their knack for forward thinking, is perhaps another factor in the company's fortunes.

Consider the latest craze for the concept of Bullpup airguns. FX have had a couple of designs in their line-up, long before recent enthusiasm has prompted a plethora of manufacturers to come forward, and under the spotlight here is the Indy - a specialist tool, that comes very well appointed.

FAMILY TRAITS

Of course much of the inspiration for the Indy comes from its full length stable mate, the Independence - a model that fuelled my obsession for truly self-contained pneumatic airguns, back in 2010, when I first tested one. What made, and indeed still makes, it so different, is that unlike a conventional PCP, that has to be fully charged via an external air supply of some sort, the Independence comes complete with its very own on- board pump, effectively offering a choice of charging methods. Suffice to say, after my original encounter, I was left mightily impressed with the efficiency of the system.

Fast forward to the FX Indy on test here, and what we have is an ultra compact Bullpup layout, that utilizes that very same on-board pump system, lifted from its full-length stable mate. Bristling with features, and with more than one trick up its sleeve, the Indy has an awful lot to offer, and highlight... so we'd best make a start.

First stop, and for those unfamiliar, a quick confirmation of what the Bullpup label really means. It refers to a design that positions its action and feed system etc. behind the pistol grip so making for a very compact build with no sacrifice of barrel length. If you favour a more fast handling gun with weight distribution naturally more central or towards the rear, then these could be the answer. Military rifles, such as the British L85, have long since adopted the concept, and this phenomenon is slowly creeping into other shooting disciplines, but one thing's for sure - those visuals will divide opinion.

My test gun came in .22 calibre, with a 12-shot rotary magazine (16 shots in .177), side-lever cocking, raised scope rail, 2-stage match trigger, Smoothtwist barrel, full length shroud, and as mentioned, the on-board pump system.

SYNTHETICS & FINISH

Synthetic stocks have become something of a speciality for FX, and the combination of clever configuration and that super 'soft to the touch', composite material utilized, makes for a great end product. The main thrust of the Indy's handle is a generous one-piece moulding that features a drop down pistol grip, integral trigger guard, flared forend complete with accessory rail, and an adjustable butt pad. There's even a small cavity for the magazine to be stored, push-fit style, alongside the inset manometer; so top marks for attention to detail. The cheek piece is a neat separate attachment, adjustable via an Allen key, and it shields the face from contact with the action block.

Given some of those top end RRP's, I haven't always felt the finish to be quite up to scratch on a few FX models tested. Well that's all in the past, as this pioneering brand has really upped their game. The Indy sports an ultra matt finish covering the full length shroud and compression cylinder, and everything seems precisely machined and finished to an exacting standard. Marks around the axis and contact points of the pumping arm, along with evidence of fine wear around the piston seal, are minor details, and to be fair, probably par for the course on this type of airgun.

SCOPING UP & MAG PREP

Having the action set directly over the entire stock, means Bullpups naturally create a higher sight line than normally configured rifles, as the shooters cheek sits above the action. FX deal with this by offering a chunky raised scope rail, fitted as an 'intermount' between the front of the action and along the barrel shroud. It's a reassuringly rigid set-up, and with deep dovetail rails cut, fitting a scope is made simple.

The Indy uses an FX magazine that's very similar to Theoben's old cassette design, with an obvious change to differentiate it. To fill the mag, grip it clear face on, and twist the front see-through cover fully anti-clockwise, then insert the first pellet skirt first, from the rear. Turn the mag over, and just carry on filling head first as normal. Now cock the Indy's side lever, push the mag into position, and you're ready to go. Slightly quirky, but in operation, it was faultless.

CHARGING

Pressurizing the Indy is where the fun starts, and once familiarity sets in, it's incredible versatility becomes obvious. A conventional Foster-style bayonet valve connection sits underneath the action, and this can be

The compact nature of the layout is obvious and this rifle still has a 19.25" barrel

connected via the adaptor, to an air bottle, and charged in the normal way, to the recommended 220bar. From here, you can just shoot it to empty; but you'd be mad to do so! For the beauty of the system is that you have the option of using the on-board pump to top up as you go.

Pumping the action requires that large side-lever handle on the right of the action, to be gripped and pulled out/rearwards then closed again to compress air that has now been sucked into the air chamber as you go. The effort required to complete one stroke, is extremely low, and interestingly, remains so, up to a max of around 25-30 pumps to fill an empty chamber. It's so slick; just gently top up pumps in between every shot, or just after every couple.

IN USE

On the range, the Indy had a novel feel, and shot really well, although I did find it just a little disconcerting, having the lead hand so near that muzzle, due to the barrel shroud barely extending past the forend! A normal grip position can find the hand close to where you don't want it, and it would make sense for FX to extend the shroud by a couple of inches for that reason. As for the forend; the flared grip is really comfortable. The 2-stage trigger works well, with the match blade a big asset, whilst for those who are interested, a manual safety catch is neatly positioned to the rear/right of the receiver.

As for confirmation of the statistics, from a full charge of 220bar, I returned 24-shots within 31 fps using FX's own pellets. That may sound low, but it becomes pretty meaningless once the on-board pump is used to top up as required! Adopt this method, and rolling consistency figures came in at around 17 fps. Accuracy was also extremely good from the Smoothtwist barrel, with sub- 1/2" clusters easily managed over a 40 yard range in this case.

I've got this far and not even mentioned the fact that FX also fit a power adjuster feature to this model! This allows the power to be switched from 7, 9, or 11.5ft/lbs approx. by turning the tiny wheel, on the left side of the action. It really is that simple too, and it brings further versatility to an already cocky airgun!

The head sits over the action, note the polymer cheek rest fitted as standard; Bullpups can take a bit of getting used to!

As an intriguing aside, the manufacturers actually specify the Indy as quickly convertible to fire arrows, when specified in FAC spec.! Apparently, the barrel is removed first for this curious make-over, and it surely serves as a perfect illustration as to the thought processes of Fredrik Axellson!

UNIQUELY APPEALING

Where Bullpups are concerned, opinion will always be divided, but an increasing number of manufacturers are taking the plunge and adding one to their range. It's a radical configuration at the end of the day, but if this sort of airgun appeals, then the Indy is comfortably one of the better offerings. The on-board pumping system is the trump card here and it means this model remains largely unchallenged within its own sector of the market, holding as it does, unique appeal for the serious enthusiast, looking to go down the self-contained route. At £1364, the Indy represents a significant outlay, but once you consider the features included, and that unique on-board pump system, there's little on the market to compete with it. As for niggles, some sort of push-on cover/ cap is needed for the filling valve end under the action, but otherwise, it's a cracking design!

An extensive raised scope rail comes as standard

Innovative design is everywhere with the Indy

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Model	FX Indy	
Type	Multi-shot Bullpup PCP	
Calibre	.22 on test/ .177, .25 avail	
Weight	8.8lbs	
Length:	29.5"	
Barrel	19.5" Smoothtwist	
Magazine	12-shot rotary	(16 shot in .177, 11 in .25)
Stock	synthetic compound	
Trigger	2-stage adjustable semi match	
Power Source	Integral pump/ or bottle	
Fill Pressure	220bar	
Shot Count	24 on test through full charge	
Velocity On test, .22 calibre FX (JSB) pellets	High	580fps
	Low	549
	Ave	570
	Spread	31fps over whole charge/ 17fps if pump used periodically
Energy	11.5ft/lbs (7 and 9ftlbs settings also available)	
RRP	£1364	
Contact	Anglo Spanish Imports, 01728 688555	

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SS11.15/49/f

BLOOD, SWEAT

Peter Knight implements Plan-B in his goal to get the best out of a workable but basic springer

Safety spring and plunger removed; take care not to lose them!

Getting the trigger in the cocked position

Several companies offer a basic air rifle, scope and mounts for less than £150. The next level up is say £225 for the rifle and add your own budget scope and mounts. That easily takes you to the £300 mark. A big jump if you are starting out or even worse, trying to persuade your partner/parents it's what you want for your birthday!

Now, if you are fairly mechanically able, don't mind invalidating the warranty (remember this; I won't keep repeating myself) and can follow this article; here is PLAN-B. Spend less than £150, invest time and emerge with a rifle worthy of the price bracket above.

FIRST STEPS

I chose a Remington Express with synthetic stock. Good basic accuracy, the trigger feels a bit rough but is similar in design to the Weihrauch Rekord unit so may be tuneable. The plastic furniture has a much smaller trigger reach than the wooden version and my local dealer had an ex-demonstrator for sale! Whilst excellent value for money, it will have some issues when compared to air rifle exotica!

Original group, 20mm approx and note the inconsistency!

The scope supplied, like most fixed focus /parallax-types, is sharpest at 100 yards! I shot for years getting eye strain before I knew that; and on a lot of optics especially cheap ones, it's easy to fix! Unscrew the end ring, unscrew the inner threaded ring a turn or so until it focuses at 25 yards. Screw the outer ring back on. Top tip!

Next clean the gunk from the bore, it is said a new rifle takes 1000 or so pellets before it shoots its best. I use heavy fishing line folded in half to act as a pull-through/loop, a cloth patch dampened with white spirit is attached and pulled through. Then a dry patch and repeat until clean. I sometimes put a drop of oil on the last one.

PETER KNIGHT SAYS:

"I chose a Remington Express with synthetic stock. Good basic accuracy, the trigger feels a bit rough but is similar in design to the Weihrauch Rekord unit so may be tuneable"

AND TEARS

The Remington Express - an ideal candidate for an inexpensive home tune up

INTO THE WORKSHOP

My example had a variation of 20 fps over five shots and produced an inconsistent 20mm at 25 yards. Not great for HFT but perfectly acceptable for learning and having loads of fun. A previously tested example was better than this but some variation is expected. I want to improve the feel of cocking, firing and accuracy and reduce the hold sensitivity and outrageous noise! Whip the action out of the stock (two side screws at the fore end and two in the trigger guard) and the barrel from the action (fig 5).

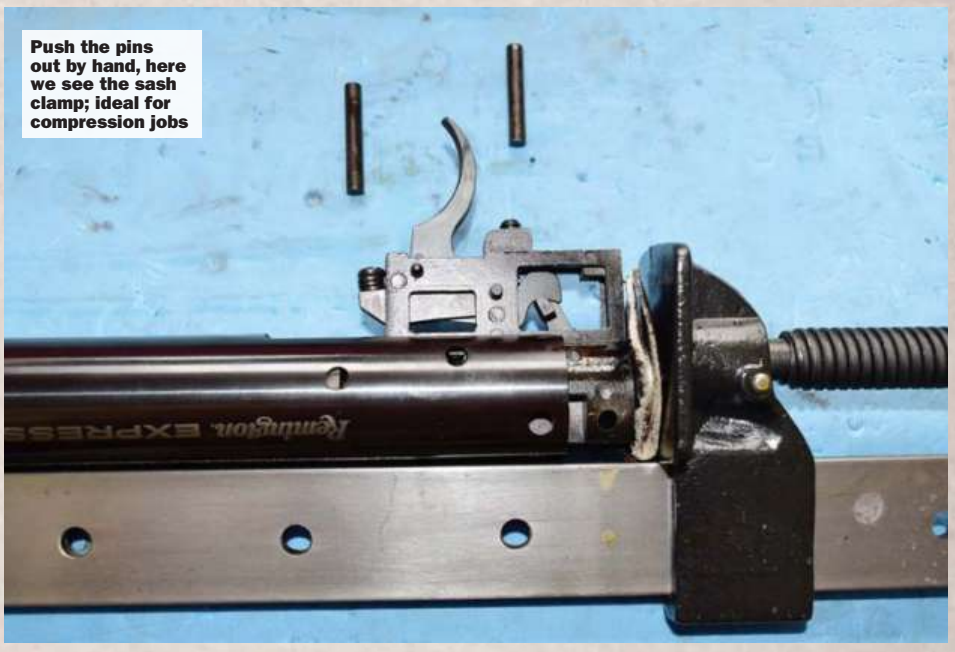
THE TRICKY PART

In an otherwise straightforward job, this is tricky; so is putting it back! First we need to remove the safety, just below the lever you will see a tiny grub screw, STOP! Don't just unscrew it, it's not done up tight but its position is critical. Note how many turns it takes to undo so that you can put it back in the same position. You will see that a tiny spring and plunger also fall out of the hole.

Cock the trigger by pushing down the main spring sear and pulling the middle sear into the cocked position (fig 7-8). At this moment the safety may well ping out into your face. Keep all these pesky little parts for later. Fig 9 shows the trigger un-cocked so you can see how the rear sear interacts with the safety in the hole.

THE EASY PART

Using a sash clamp, two bits of old leather belt and a washer (to ensure the pressure is on the trigger block and not the rear of the action), lightly compress the whole assembly. With just the correct amount of pressure the ▶



Push the pins out by hand, here we see the sash clamp; ideal for compression jobs

Note the damaged seal

Main spring and guide rod - loose but better than nothing

▶ two pins can be pushed out by hand. Fig 10-11. Undo the clamp and remove all the rifle's internals.

The trigger assembly has no lube but looks promising; the main spring has a guide (good) which is a loose fit (bad). The spring sleeve (good) has a welding ridge down it (bad). The seal had been damaged during assembly and the inside of the action has a few sharp edges - doubtless the source of that problem. There's thick oil on everything, including the face of the seal! (Fig 12-17)

The spring sleeve, the weld line can clearly be seem; not good!

FIXING THE EASY STUFF

Heat the end of the spring to a dull red and bend flat with pliers. Let cool slowly. Grind flatter. Fig 18-19. Carefully cut off the flappy bits of the seal and as it was a tight fit, re-size slightly with 240 wet and dry. Polish the outer end 10mm of the piston (fig 20).

Make a contraption shown in fig 21 and by placing some 120 grit paper in the slot and sticking it in a drill, clean up the inside of the action tube. Get all the burrs off (fig 22). Don't forget that one in the spring sleeve too.

Re-assemble. Paint a smidgen (more consistent but noisier) or thickish coating of grease on the spring, a lump on the main sear where it holds the spring cocked and a little on the outer edge of the seal. I lightly oil the trigger sears and the start of the action to aid getting the seal in undamaged. Don't let any oil get in front of the seal. With the lost half coil off the spring I was able to push the trigger block into the action tube by hand and replace the two pins.

DID I ACHIEVE ANYTHING?

Things have improved! Nice quiet cocking action but more twang when firing, probably because the spring has more room to flap in the outer sleeve now the ridge has gone and less lube. Only 12 FPS variation now and averaging 11.1ft lbs with 8.4 JSBs, perfect. Next time the trigger comes in for some serious work and I may have to fix that twang. No tuning money spent, though looking at the second target I'm not convinced it's that better, let's see next time.

Six shots in a variable wind. Looks a bit lucky to me!

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SS11.15/10r

Prize winners at the English Open - a great day was had by all

HFT DIARY

BACK TO BASICS!

Mark Camoccio looks at some of the comps and says never forget to take gun safety seriously

Another busy month skips by, and there's barely been a free weekend without a competition of some sort! With summer fast slipping away, it pays to make the most of the weather of course, and for the most part, we've had pretty good conditions in which to shoot. Here's a quick round-up of some of the action from the last month.

Past master, Dave Welham- back in the trophies at the HFT Masters, Coventry

HFT MASTERS: GREYHOUND, COVENTRY

Ian Bainbridge and his merry crew have been spreading the word with their HFT Masters events and the latest one, held at the Greyhound club, near Coventry, went down a storm. My old mate Dave Welham (Airmasters) seems to have swallowed some wonder drug of late, with a spate of strong finishes. A worthy third place here, after a great score in windy conditions, had plenty of shooters double taking at the score board. Dave had a period of dominating FT in the early days, and it's great to see him making a mini come-back once in a while in HFT.

Results:			
Tier 1 :			
Open	1st	Andy Wilson	58
	2nd	Simon Vant	57
	3rd	Dave Welham	55
	Springer	Kyle Hampton	53
Tier 2:			
Open	1st	Bert Tate	54
	2nd	Ry Tombs	54
	3rd	Gert Spoelstra	54
	Springer	Davy Thomas	55
	Junior	Dominic Taylor	56

ENGLISH OPEN, (UKAHFT) MISFITS GROUND, NR OAKHAM

The 'English Open Championship' is a title worth fighting for and this major shoot was held at a new ground that the Misfits club, (previously operating from Kibworth), had hastily arranged. I managed to get a late entry, and as it panned out, with barmy hot weather, and a lovely hay covered field to lie in it was a cracking event! Testing wind, and those super close conditions played havoc with scores, yet some big names prevailed.

With a 52 and effectively joint 6th position I retired reasonably satisfied, with my best performance of the year by far! As for the real contenders; Theresa Reed is fast emerging as a major force on the circuit. She equalled the all conquering Rudy Goldslade here and after a tense shoot-off the English Open title was hers, along with the Ladies class. Apparently relatively new to the sport Theresa is experiencing a real purple patch of form. Definitely one to watch for the future!

Results:			
English Open Champion:		Theresa Reed	55
Open Class:	1st	Rudy Goldslade	55
	2nd	Paul Kelly	54
	3rd	Daz Taylor	54
Ladies:	1st	Theresa Reed	55
Junior:	1st	Elliott Reed	52
Recoiling	1st	Bob Clay	47

HERO TO ZERO!

UKAHFT NATIONAL ROUNDS 6 -
MALDON, ESSEX- SPONSORED BY WEIHRAUCH

Maldon has become a regular host to UKAHFT events and with a large contingent of the country's top shots in their ranks there's plenty of experience behind their course setting. Richard Woods and Vince Holland were to blame; I mean thank, for this weekend's bash, and the Saturday in particular, proved a real challenge.

My score can't even be discussed, but I wasn't the only experienced competitor to be destroyed on the hillside section! Ironically, I hit the ultra steep tree shot that caused such controversy, but this was soon followed by the dreaded zeros! Too much wind, or not enough? I'm still not sure, but thankfully, there was always the next day, to eradicate painful memories! Great scores still arrived from some with Alex Honeywell, (taking fifth here)back on form.

Generous sponsorship from Weihrauch saw plenty of prizes, including Laura Dickson winning an HW100 in the raffle, but this was just the icing on an excellent days sport, regardless of those dodgy scores.

UKAHFT NATIONAL ROUND 7 -
MALDON, ESSEX- SPONSORED BY TEAM WILD

Early start; full English, (maybe that's where I'm going wrong) then back for more action. Staying overnight makes these shoot weekends a really sociable affair, but it's a fine line not to over-indulge and blow your chances of success.

Missing all but one of my discipline shots in the morning was the problem this time around, but Richard Woods showed us all how it's done on his home ground, with a fantastic 57ex60. There was far less wind than the previous day but the course setters had done us proud with another superbly challenging layout. A game of two halves though, with us morning shooters enjoying perfectly dry conditions and the afternoon squad being forced to take an absolute soaking in their stride. That's HFT!

Thanks then for a great weekend- to the sponsors (Steve Edmondson won a particularly tastyTX200 Special Edition in the raffle), and to all who worked so hard to make this, and those other events, the great success they were.

Results:			
Open Class:	1st	Colin Wilson	56
	2nd	Vince Blackman	56
	3rd	Andrew Burgess	54
Juniors 9-13:	1st	Mitchell Birch	34
Juniors 14-16:	1st	Jennifer Allan	47
Ladies:	1st	Mia Roberts	45
Recoiling:	1st	Kyle Hampton	46
.22:	1st	Edward Tandi	43
Top Club:	MAD		
Top Manufacturer:	Steyr		

Prize-winners at Maldon, day 1

Results:			
Open Class:	1st	Richard Woods	57
	2nd	Pete Dutton	56
	3rd	Elliott Compton	56
Juniors 9-13:	1st	Laura Dickson	39
Juniors 14-16:	1st	Elliott Reed	50
Ladies:	1st	Theresa Reed	54
Recoiling:	1st	Kyle Hampton	53
.22:	1st	Edward Tandi	45
Top Club:	MAD		
Top Manufacturer:	Walther		

FOOTNOTE - SAFETY!!

OK; lecture time! One final point that still needs to be raised is the matter of safety. When I first got into shooting I had it drummed into me that the rifle must always be pointing in a safe direction. If you are standing around, make sure that the gun is pointing down at the ground, or if you are on the firing line, have it pointing up range or down at the ground at all times. If you are showing someone your kit at a club or competition either stand on the firing line and make sure it's pointing up the range, or do it carefully with the gun pointing somewhere safe.

If you are shooting at a club stand right on the firing line! It has just struck me of late that many of us are far too blasé about airguns and some people's approach to safety is worrying to say the least. Virtually every event I attend I end up looking down two or three barrels, as shooters get up from the floor, or just handle their rifle carelessly, oblivious to their surroundings. Act like that at a firearms range, and someone will escort you from the premises.

Airguns, especially a PCP with a silencer fitted, can be particularly quiet, but they are highly dangerous in careless hands. I think it's time we all sharpened up our act!

Watch where the barrel is pointing.....please

SS11.15/11/d

James Osborne explains his views on the BFTA's GP series

SHOOTING FT BLOG SPORTS

HIGH AND LOWS

The Grand Prix has been the mainstay of summer FT shooting for more years than I have been shooting at field targets, which is a lot, and it has changed a lot too over that time. The changes haven't always been welcomed, but the thing is the GP series has remained popular as I believe the idea of a national league has an irresistible draw on shooters with a competitive nature such as me. No doubt the format will continue to change and whether or not I think the changes good or bad I'll be there competing despite my occasional urges to cut back on the travelling and shoot locally.

For this season the format remained the same as last year; that is seven rounds in total with individual shooters best 5 scores to count toward their grand total. There are sound reasons behind this but it doesn't somehow feel right. Despite my wish to cut down on the amount of travelling, (even though I am a passenger most of the time, cheers Jonathan) I'd like to see a return to nine or ten rounds. Let me explain!

BEST OF THE BEST

Nine or ten rounds in the season means having to shoot against the best shooters in the country once a fortnight and that is good for competition. You also get to see more of your friends on the circuit which can't be a bad thing. My main dislike is the disjointing nature of the series. We have had seemingly random three week and two week gaps between rounds so there is no sense of continuity for me and then the last two rounds were scheduled (a fortnight apart) in the school summer

Little Jack in action

Great setting for a Field Target shoot

holidays. The chances are many people are going to miss one of those as they cannot move their holidays away from this period.

We are I think stuck with seven rounds for the foreseeable future as it becomes harder to find clubs that are both willing and able to host a round of the GP. As this is the case I think it might be better to have those seven rounds at fortnightly intervals and the series finished before the summer holiday period. One off competitions could then perhaps be held in the July and August. This may sound a little like sour grapes, especially as I missed the penultimate round for the above reasons, but I do believe it would make for a more intense competition with the fewer seven rounds.

GET ON WITH IT!

Shut up and tell us about this year's GP series I hear you saying, and you are probably right. Well I didn't win, as I bet you guessed, but there were a few twists and turns to keep our interest in the developing league tables over the season.

My own bid for the title didn't get off to a great start down in the South West where Avon Hawks put on a superb event. My shortcomings were highlighted as I happened to partner a certain FT superstar, Mr Ian Taylor (the winner of only three World titles). He missed just one target that day where many of us struggled not to miss ten. If I were a betting man my money would have gone on him to win the series.

A few rounds in, and Ian was still putting in strong performances, but it was another former World Champion Daniel Eley leading the competition and looking unstoppable. Last year's champion Andy Calpin, usually so reliable, was struggling as were some others who you would normally expect to be chasing the title down. Unfortunately Dan's title hopes were put to an end by a nasty mountain bike accident (get well soon Dan) mid season and it looked like a certainty for Ian.

IT AIN'T OVER UNTIL...

But as is so often the case in sport, it wasn't yet quite over. Jack Harris had been putting in good strong scores after a slow start to the season and when it came to shoot the last round he and Ian were effectively tied for the lead. Somehow they were paired to shoot together in that final round, fantastic stuff, the old master against the arrogance of youth, winner takes all. The result? A very solid score of 46 ex 50 from Ian just wasn't enough as Jack coolly pumped in the days top score of 48.

From my point of view this was excellent news. My Air Arms team had lost the team event to the Rowan Engineering line-up, and with Jack an Air Arms team member, I could bury the bad news beneath his personal glory, when I had to report back to Air Arms!

Of course it isn't just about those at the very top of the FT game, the GP series contains competitions in many grades; all equally hard fought as the 'AA' grade competition. A-grade was won by Keith Gilyard who continued his excellent form from last winter into the summer, and I see no reason why he won't be pushing for the higher places in AA grade next summer.

350 of these to shoot in the GP series.

Jack Harris with his hard won trophies

PISTON PLEASURE

I had the pleasure of shooting with the winners of the Piston Class and B-grade at shoots this year, and they both impressed me mightily at the time so I am not surprised they won their respective grades. Steve Privett is a master of the spring gun. When I shot with him, I put in what I considered a good score with all the help my equipment offers, and he pushed me all the way beating most of the field with his score. B-grade was won by Redvers Gallagher, a young man relatively new to the sport. I had the pleasure of his company while shooting the tough course Tawd Vale had laid on for us. While he struggled with the evil wind, his standing technique was second to none and will certainly be a name to look out for in the future.

Just to complete the picture, C-grade was won by NEFTA shooter Gavin Hopps and in the Open class Ian Challis took top honours. Full results and further information on FT shooting can be found at www.thebfta.net

HFT500 PALM REST KIT

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Palm Sunday!

Mark Camoccio tests a useful accessory for the Hunter Field Target shooter from Air Arms

The new Palm Rest Kit in place on the Air Arms HFT500; a great piece of kit

When Air Arms introduced the HFT500 model specifically aimed at the popular sport of Hunter Field Target Shooting, it became an instant success, with orders flooding in from all quarters. The company's flagship FTP900 has of course won a hatful of silverware since its introduction, but that beefy 11lbs weight simply isn't for everyone, so the less complicated HFT500 was the obvious next move; offering the choice of a seriously competitive rifle, in a simplified, more conventional, lighter format.

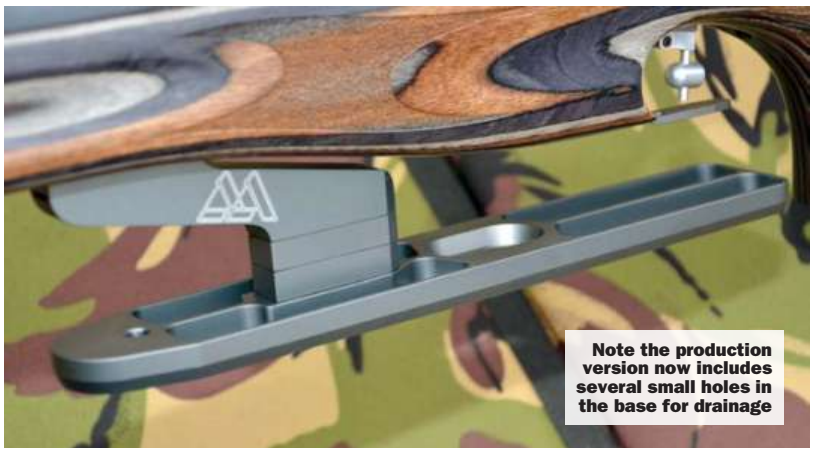
The combination of a tried and tested power plant, derived from the company's S400 and side-lever variant S500, and a full length FAC-style main cylinder, makes for a superbly balanced sporting tool. A totally floating barrel, quality trigger, air stripper as standard and a stylish laminate stock, gives this model more than a fighting chance in competition too! So it's little wonder that significant results in HFT competition have already been racked up.

FAMILIAR TERRITORY

I competed for several years with an S400 sporting an extended FAC cylinder, so I know how well this configuration balances and feels in competition. The HFT500 has a bulkier stock than many a standard sporter, yet the demands of HFT are such that a raised forend section can really pay dividends in certain situations. We're not able to sit like FT shooters, so with the prone position the mainstay for 'freestyle' shots, it can be a back breaking affair when course builders push things to the limit.

Elevated targets up trees are often at quite awkward angles and this can be a real strain on the shooter, to get into a position where the shot can be taken with confidence. Other scenarios see 'off peg' shots required, where the competitor may be touching the peg with their foot, yet lying off to one side. In this situation, the aim is made so much easier with a deeper forend section of stock to support the lead hand.

Someone with a super slim-line forend will soon run out of options, where a shooter with a more target orientated stock, may well be able to adapt to the challenge. Building this in from the start, as in the FTP900, adds cost and bulk and for many, it's too much all round. With the HFT500, it made sense to provide some add-on accessories that would enhance the product, to the benefit of shooters, eager to extract maximum performance in the field. Offering a Palm Rest Kit as an optional extra, was therefore the way to go, allowing an upgrade if required.



Note the production version now includes several small holes in the base for drainage

FOR
Excellent accessory for the Air Arms using HFT shooter

AGAINST
Not a lot

VERDICT
A well priced and practical design
A no-brainer for any Air Arms user!

CUSTOMIZATION

Turn up at any Hunter Field Target event, and it soon becomes clear that many competitors revel in the chance to customize their stocks, with all manner of add-ons and technical tweaks here and there. Air Arms' plan was always to offer some form of stock raiser/ hamster as an option and the new kit is the result of evaluation and assessment. As a rabid HFT competitor myself, and a long standing user of their products, I was asked to evaluate several prototype versions. After several consultations and tweaks, and straw polls from the clubs I frequent, the final design was arrived at. My final recommendation was drainage holes in the bottom plate, and I'm pleased to see these have been incorporated into the final design.

The Palm Rest Kit comprises of the main palm shelf, 3mm and 5mm Allen keys, washers, screws, and two different length extenders. The palm shelf is machined from aircraft-grade aluminium and is extremely well finished. Assembly is super easy; with two Allen bolts holding the shelf to the central supports and just one chunky bolt that tightens the whole assembly into position. Slacken off the clamping section, slide the shelf assembly onto the accessory rail of the rifle and gently nip up the bolt head. Slide along the rail to the desired position and then fully tighten into place with the Allen key supplied once it feels right.

Handling, support and overall feel of the rifle is transformed in an instant and with some swish detail added at the production stage, along with the company logo proudly displayed on the central support, looks are enhanced too. I'm rarely disappointed with Air Arms products, and this Palm Shelf Kit is certainly up to scratch; being well thought through, and superbly executed. Bring on the standers!!

{ TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS }

HFT500 Palm Rest Kit (fits any Air Arms rail - other brands rail size may vary)

Price:	**£95 Extra Spacer Kit: £13.95**
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FEATURES

● Power: 12ft lbs or FAC ● Cocking: Sidelever ● Weight: 2.8kg ● Barrel Length: 450mm ● Overall Length: 800mm ● Barrel: Rifled ● Outer Barrel: Full Shrouded ● Mount Base: Receiver one piece 20mm rail ● Trigger Adjustment: Two Stage Adjustable (Multi Adjustable with 3 positions) ● Approx Trigger Pull: 2lbs ● Magazine: 10 shot with 2 pellet loading prevention system ● Action: Side lever single action ● Power Plant: Pre charged Pneumatic ● Discharge System: Diect air system ● Air Cylinder: 280cc ● Shot count: Approx .177 cal = 150 shots / .22 cal 180 shots ● Receiver: Aluminium ● Safety: Manual ● Butt plate: Rubber

Email: acguns@talktalk.net Tel: 01424 752261

SS11.15/60/f

Mark Camoccio tries his hand at one of the most demanding disciplines of all 10m match pistols

An impressive performer and most affordable - the TAU BRNO MK08 Match

STERN MISTRESS

Indoor target shooting can be very appealing and many of us, myself included gained invaluable experience from an indoor club from quite an early age. A disciplined approach and an informative, supportive atmosphere are the building blocks of any successful sport, and that's certainly something that I was lucky enough to experience within the target club scene as I learned the ropes, so to speak.

For those who decide to concentrate on the indoor sports, air pistol shooting is one of the options and it can be very rewarding. Match air pistol is a highly specialized area and surely one of the very hardest target sport disciplines in which to compete. The inherently slow lock-time of the airgun, coupled with the testing nature of pistol shooting in general, is enough to challenge the very best. But it's perhaps the cost of competing as the kit becomes more technical that can prove a stumbling block for many.

CZECH THIS OUT

On test here is one of the new air pistols from TAU BRNO based in the Czech Republic, the MK08 Match is aimed at the more experienced shooter who has already ascertained that they like the sport and wishes to progress to the next level. Plenty of general purpose pistols exist as starter models or informal target shooting options. However this new model from TAU BRNO has a level of refinement built in, that should help take a budding hopeful to where they want to be.

It's fair to say that the MK08 comes well appointed with an attractive padded plastic hard case, charging adaptor, Allen keys and interchangeable fore sight inserts are included. At £660, it represents a significant outlay, but with big names such as Steyr and FWB offering match-grade fare around the £1500-£2000 mark, cost is clearly relative. So let's take a closer look at what we get for the money, and see whether this model gets close to the performance needed.

ATTENTION SEEKER

The MK08 Match is a single-shot PCP match air pistol, sporting an adjustable anatomical grip, regulated action, 2-stage match trigger, pressure gauge, muzzle stripper, side lever action, dry-fire facility,

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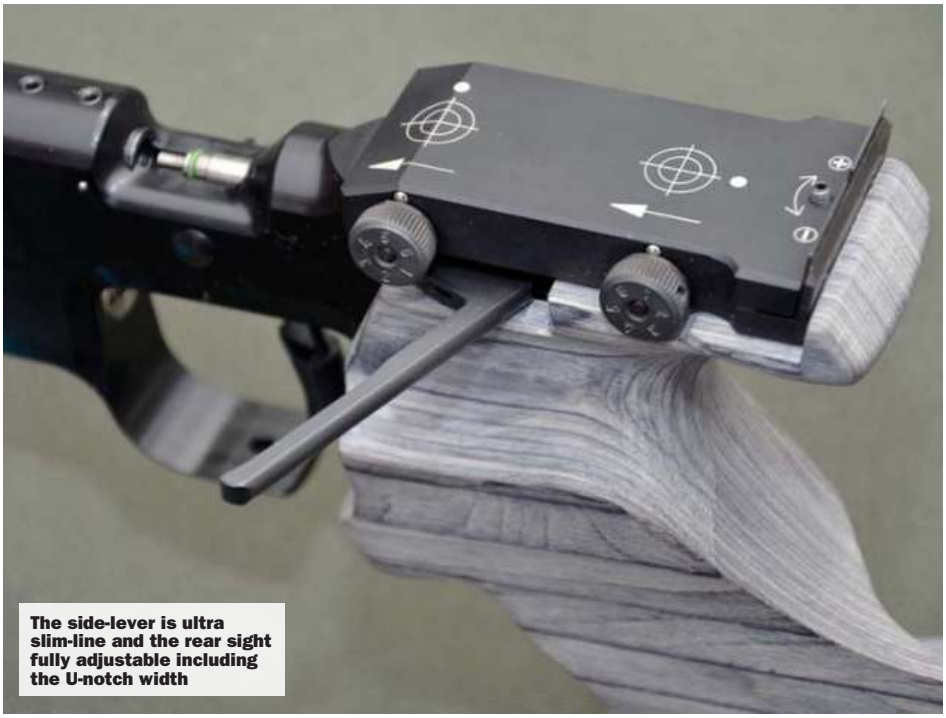
Breech and probe detail, single shot loading is easy!

Action and grip are easily separated, which is required to adjust the trigger



The side-lever is ultra slim-line and the rear sight fully adjustable including the U-notch width

and adjustable sights. Quite a features list to cover, so I'd better get started!

Striking looks come from a combination of that snazzy blue anodized cylinder and the full target anatomical grips. Basically, the MK08 looks every inch the serious target model that it's intended to be. Looking first to the grey laminate grips, TAU BRNO offer a choice of either small or large and right or left handed. My tester was supplied in large with a right hand configuration and my large hand felt just perfect, wrapped around the grip.

The fingers sit nicely under the front overhang, whilst a shelf supports the trigger finger on the right and a corresponding shelf does the same with the thumb on the left; only offset higher. The palm sits up against the left side and overall the grips felt as if they had been moulded to suit my hand as it was genuinely that snug! They'll be some luck here of course with differing hand sizes and natural physique dictating how good the fit is, but with those grip size options many should be well catered for. The palm shelf does a good job of capping off the grip, and this can be adjusted for height and angle by slackening off the twin bolts at the base.

Looking to the action, all the metalwork is very well finished with the aluminium receiver treated to a deep gloss black anodized finish while the barrel is chemically blued. The blue anodized cylinder came a little marked on my test model, but I was assured in advance that this was a show example and normal production would be slicker. The three chambered muzzle stripper looks the part too, and this gets a matt black finish, which helps minimize glare around the sights.

PREPARATION

To charge the cylinder first needs to be removed from the action. TAU BRNO state a maximum fill pressure of 300bar, but in practise, shot count is so high, that I would recommend sticking to 200bar, where everything will be under far less stress. Removal is as follows: cock the side lever and close it again, push the dry-fire button to the right, then gently unscrew the cylinder and remove. It can now either be screwed directly into the main thread of a diving cylinder, or linked to either the hose of a bottle, or a pump, via the adaptor block (supplied). If you take the bottle route, then just unscrew the ▶

cylinder on completion and don't use the bleed facility. If you link up via a hose and the adaptor, then the line needs to be bled in the normal way first. The MK08 has no filter, but there is a manometer set into the front of the cylinder. I can't help thinking that locating the gauge in the front of the cylinder is a bad trend on many PCP's, since it encourages us to almost look down the barrel - hardly safe practise!

SIGHTING IN

As a match pistol, the MK08 comes with adjustable open sights fitted as standard. The front post can be switched with two alternative sized elements, by slackening the tiny grub screw and removing the insert. On test, I did find one of the replacements inserts particularly tight in the recess, to the point where oil, some pliers, and brute force were required; but I soon had it moving. As for the rear-sight, the notch size is also adjustable- this time by slackening off the tiny screws in the back of the plate, then inserting the Allen key into the hole at the top, to the unit. Turning left or right will increase or decrease the width. Overall then, impressive and versatile sights, to fine tune as required.

Cocking the action requires the slim-line side-lever to be pulled gently backwards. Roll a pellet across and into the loading channel and close the lever. A dry fire option exists, which just needs the small cross button to be pushed to the right once the lever has been cocked- allowing the trigger pull to be felt without actually firing a shot. The only disconcerting aspect here is that air is discharged when the dry-fire button is returned to the 'fire 'mode.

SLICK OPERATOR

Handling the MK08 soon reveals a very capable pistol indeed, with those anatomical grips bringing great feel and control to the proceedings. The full palm shelf contributes to the super snug fit, whilst a nice amount of forward weight helps stabilize the sight picture. TAU BRNO fit a very competent 2-stage match trigger to this model and with a quoted figure of 100 grams minimum pull weight (approximately 4 oz); I was always likely to be impressed. The position of the blade can be altered for both length of pull and rotation around its axis. However, to adjust the release pressures the wooden grip first needs to be removed, to allow access into the rear of the auction block. My only gripe here is the slightly rough finish to the edges of the blade, but function isn't affected in the slightest.

Rough finish, but the trigger is very precise and is fully adjustable

Overall a great performer and a comprehensive package for sub-£700 that will suit serious 10m MATCH shooters!

So to the test figures. Over the chronograph, the TAU's regulated action managed an impressive 19 fps total spread over 147-shots from a recommended 200 bar. As mentioned, this model can be charged to a maximum300 bar, where the shot count will significantly increase, but it's just not worth it. I decided to test accuracy using the Diabolo Final Match JSB pellets supplied over 10 yds indoors and shooting from a rest to thoroughly test the action; since my pistol shooting isn't what it was! Super tight ragged holes were the result, capable of supporting a pellet! Adopting a two-handed freestyle stance, I could normally keep my shots within an inch. With little discernible movement on firing a distinctive but satisfying muzzle report, and those reassuring statistics, I finished the session mightily impressed.

The pistol comes with three, interchangeable front sight elements

CONCLUSION

Bear in mind the cost of the top end match PCP pistols these days, then this TAU BRNO sits squarely in the middle of the market; being neither cheap, nor anywhere near their respective RRPs. Judge it on performance though and it's difficult not to conclude that this MK08 has all the makings of a serious match tool. Overall, it looks and feels the part. OK; some of the finish isn't quite as slick as it should be, but quality overall is pleasing, with a competitive, highly enjoyable package the result.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Name	MK08 Match pistol	
Type	Regulated PCP Match pistol	
Capacity	single shot only	
Calibre	177 only	
Weight	2.25lbs	
Length	17"	
Barrel	9.25"	
Cocking System	Side lever	
Stock	Laminate anatomical, with adjustable palm rest	
Trigger	2-stage match, adjustable down to 4oz pull weight	
Fill Pressure	min200bar-max300bar	
Shot Count	147-shots on test from 200bar	
Velocity -using Diabolo Final Match JSB pellets	High	521fps
	Low	502
	Ave	509fps
	Spread	19fps
Energy	4.8 ft/lbs ave on test	
Price	£660 as tested Inc charging adaptor and tools, foresight elements and hard case	
Options	Small or large grips, Left hand options, and Modern Pentathlon Laser barrel conversion POA	
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Double LIFE

A pellet pouch is useful as it keeps them quiet as is a laser rangefinder

From the road on arrival- it's quite a large area to play with

A corn field borders one side, which provides perfect cover for the rabbits

Mark Camoccio steps away from the HFT field to indulge in some rabbit clearance for a little old lady

It sometimes feels like I'm living a double life if I'm honest. A dyed- in-the wool 'towny' from London, now happily residing in deepest Lincolnshire. Not to everyone's taste I'm sure, but if you take away the lack of choice of top restaurants and quality drinking holes, compared to Metropolis Central, day to day existence is all rather civilized. For one thing, the curse of the traffic jam rarely surfaces in these parts; but another major benefit of more rural living has to be connections within the country community; meaning I now have several hunting permissions from which to choose from. I'm lucky on that score; the product of a small familiar community, and the increased opportunity that goes with it.

My tally was modest, but I'll be back... better prepared

FIELD OPS

Mrs Martin is a sweet elderly lady on the outskirts of my village and as the friend of a friend; I've got to know her along the way. Giving her a hand with trimming her hedges a while back and spending much of the duration being taunted by the local rabbit population, I couldn't resist popping the question. "I don't suppose I could help with keeping the rabbits down could I?" "I run a club and I'll be super safe" etc... 'As long as I can't see it being done, of course you can', was the reply, and I couldn't believe my luck. This was some while back, and the main prong of attack was centred around her lawn. This time out, in a bid to cause her as little disruption as possible, I confirmed that the back fields bordering her property would be the battle ground.

Some basic kit really makes a difference in the field and a pellet pouch keeps ammo not only safe, but quiet, with no rattling tins to ruin your chances. My other top piece of kit and I actually forgot it on this occasion, is a laser range-finder. Using technology helps minimize wounding anything, so it has to make sense; especially with the looping trajectory of your average hunting air rifle!

GETTING IN

Approaching the venue from the main road, I could just back in off the highway, into the small lead in. Open one large latched gate, and I'm there. However, the latch being heavy metal and tightly jammed, due to the gate having dropped some while back, was never going to go quietly!

Having hunted on many occasions over the years, I know only too well that the scene on arrival could quite often be the most bountiful opportunity of the lot. If the area has been undisturbed for some while then there may be a surprisingly large number of prospective targets waiting. Spook the residents, and you may not get another opportunity for some time.

If I'm honest I'm no dedicated hunter, mainly due to the fact that I often lack the patience - so basically, I need to make this initial encounter period work in my favour. Back to that latch and despite a heavy metallic squeak and a couple of bunnies white bobtails instantly disappearing into the undergrowth, I could sense that the sheer distance between my din and the main target area was enough to minimize my clumsy entry.

BE STILL

Freeze! In my experience the biggest factor in spooking quarry is movement. Much is made of camouflage kit and of course it helps the cause, but stealth and field craft are equally if not even more vital! The first field was now looking sadly free of my furry friends, so a really slow and sidle-up to the large opening in the hedgerow would be my first task. If I could make it to there with no unnecessary movement or noise, I would be in a perfect vantage point, with an outlook back into the main field, and a good view into the back sectors, either side of another central hedge. A corn field sits to the right side, so there's plenty of cover for our pesky friends.

Slowly does it and at the corner, I stole a glance without actually moving my head in the direction. Freeze again, two, maybe three rabbits froze too, yet maintained their position in the field. One of them sat bolt upright and was looking right at me. A quick estimation of range made it 30 yards if that. Nicely in range, but hold on; he's running straight at me! Slowly, very slowly, I drop to a kneeling position virtually in the open, but with a small clump of nettles just masking my left side. Between us, we've closed the distance to no more that 20 yards, and I take aim with intent.

Cross hairs just under the eye, a slow trigger release and thwack! As clean a kill as could be wished for with just a small kick of the nerves indicating it was all over for him. This wasn't a fully grown rabbit, but with a labyrinth of warrens covering much of the field and horses regularly sharing the land, Mrs Martin is happy with a ruthless approach, for the safety of the horses as much as anything. Ground can give way under their feet so my task was a contribution to clearance, with no room for sentiment. I picked up my quarry, and laid him by my case for the return journey.

CLOSE SHAVE

My base was now back in the front field and at a point where a good view was possible over a low section of the dividing hedge. 20-minutes past, then half an hour, then just as I rose to leave another fully grown rabbit bowled into view, in the back field. If I was to take him on, it would have to be a standing shot. Wait, wait, damn! A miss, as anticipation got the better of me and failing to even register a fairly strong breeze coming in from the left, my shot had cleanly missed its target. A salutary reminder of how many elements need to come together when taking on live quarry. I was lucky this time, but it's all too easy to take a snatch shot. If I'd waited, a far easier shot may well have presented itself. Ho hum.

NEXT TIME

Next time out, I reckon a proper stake out, with a comfy shooting mat on which to lie in wait will be the master plan. Until next time then, happy hunting, be well prepared, and wait for the right shot to arrive for those clean kills!

Note the articulated cocking linkage

That side barrel lock is well engineered and easy to operate

Mark Camoccio re-visits that timeless classic that is Weihrauch's HW35

Shortly after my introduction to the world of airguns (1979…how could I forget?) and as an excited teenager, I remember trawling through the streets of London with my Dad, doing a mini tour of the gun shops. Our quest was to find the very best piece of figured walnut, attached to the Webley Vulcan Deluxe, that we had decided upon. This ritual became a regular one, whenever a new/replacement rifle was on the cards - and the sense of awe and excitement I felt, entering these Aladdin's caves of hardware has stayed with me to this day. That unique smell of quality leather, gun oil, and country goods, combine like no other, but this particular afternoon, somewhere in central London, I recall this curious chap informing us of his obsession – to fix the 'Weihrauch Click'. "It may not make me a fortune", were his parting words, as we left him… surrounded by vintage Air Sporters, and airgun curios.

TIMELESS CLASSIC

Many years down the line, I doubt he's still there, long since forced out by crazy rents and the like, but his obsession largely centred around one classic piece of engineering from Weihrauch - the near legendary HW35. Introduced in 1951, this German break-barrel made a huge impression from the start and with a host of quality features and a level of engineering to outshine most of its rivals at the time, Weihrauch's new heavyweight was a runaway success. On test here is the latest version of this timeless classic and for me personally, I've considered the experience a privilege, since amazingly; I've never shot one before!

Possibly the most distinctive feature of the 35 has to be that rather neat breech or 'wedge' lock. To cock the action, that little curved catch needs to be pulled forwards with the leading hand. This releases the barrel, which can then be pulled right down to compress the spring. That semi-circular cut away in the stock, is relieved in order for the catch to pass through the forend, as the cocking stroke completes its arc, and the resultant side profile is such that there is simply no mistaking this model for any other.

So what of that intriguing 'click' referred to, by our mystery gunsmith? Well this originates from the breech lock and articulated cocking linkage moving, as the breech is opened and yes - it still occurs on the modern version. Yet whilst it could be considered an issue when hunting, back in the real world, the noise of cocking the average break barrel is fairly obtrusive in any case. In the field, being cocked, ready and waiting, is simply the better option, and here, the 35 has no great disadvantage.

A MODERN TAKE

Time moves on of course, and where the original rifle, was specified with a UK power output of around 10.5ft/lbs, today's upgraded model has replaced the original leather piston washer with synthetics, and can now punch out full limit kinetic energy. Cast an eye over the HW35 and all the usual Weihrauch attributes are here. Let's start with the attractive beech woodwork, and those stylish finger grooves in the super deep forend. Visuals overall then are fairly satisfactory, but surely it's about time to beef up that butt section, given the rather vague cheek piece? A nod to the past maybe, but consider that at the time of this model's introduction, scope use was far rarer than today, some increased definition, and physical height for today's enthusiasts wouldn't go amiss.

Classy, rich chemical bluing is all part and parcel of the Weihrauch deal, and this HW35 delivers on that count. Solidly engineered components are another company trait, and the breech area in particular, is most reassuring. Note that chunky cross bolt, to adjust later down the

K FOR Karbine!

line if necessary, if any wear should take its toll on the breech lock up. Highly unlikely admittedly, given the belts and braces design, yet all part of the reassuring detail built in.

TRADITIONAL SPEC

Open sights are always a nice inclusion, and on such an old favourite, Weihrauch have stuck wisely with traditional irons. The rear is a sprung leaf, all-metal affair, whilst the front is their time-honoured hooded design, incorporating interchangeable elements; accessed by simply unscrewing the rear of the hood assembly.

The test rifle is the now standard Carbine version, which features a fairly short 16" barrel. Given that deep forend, the overall look is rather stubby, yet the legendary Export model is still available, albeit in a trimmed down modern format of 18.5". This is available via the UK importers Hull Cartridge, and they expect ▶

Cocking effort is more than acceptable

Timeless classic- Weihrauch's HW35

The Rekord trigger unit - what else?

Weihrauch's HW35 set the standard when it was first introduced and is still a great design today!

"On the subject of triggers, that famous Rekord design features here, just as it did on the original"

these special orders to take in the region of 12 weeks to materialize from Germany.

On the subject of triggers, that famous Rekord design features here, just as it did on the original. Of course today, with an ever demanding market, several manufacturers now have its equal, yet this sophisticated cassette design still impresses enormously. Capable of fine adjustment to please most enthusiasts, triggers on spring-powered airguns don't get much better than this!

With little to moan about, other than that rather plain stock (butt), I'm limited to highlighting yet again, the tacky business of stamping a paragraph of safety warnings into the rear of the cylinder. Why such an esteemed manufacturer as Weihrauch persist in this wanton vandalism, I'm not entirely sure, but there we are. You wouldn't get it on a shotgun, and it doesn't deserve to be here!!

RANGE REPORT

So now down to business! Cocking the action, (at first a little awkward with that breech lock), soon becomes second nature, and completing the stroke and compressing the spring, is surprisingly easy, given the fairly short barrel. The usual Weihrauch crunches and clicks accompany the action, but to us enthusiasts, it's the sound of finely engineered components engaging with each other, just as they should.

Chronograph readings revealed a power plant running maybe a little high for comfort, but astonishingly consistent with my batch of Air Arms Diabolos in .22 calibre. Given the action felt slick, crisp and quick, with no spring resonance at all, it was hardly surprising that accuracy was equally impressive. Sub – ½" clusters (all shots touching) over 30 yards, achieved from an over-arm FT sitting position, was indeed most satisfying, and the HW35 proved an absolute pleasure to shoot.

CONCLUSION

Thumb through old airgun magazines from the 1970/80s and the Weihrauch HW35 appears as an object of envy - often sporting, in Export form, that frankly ludicrous, but impressive looking 22" barrel.

This modern upgrade looks rather bland in comparison for sure, yet once handled and shot, the quality and performance can be appreciated for what it is. Weihrauch rarely disappoint, and the fact that this famous old model still finds a place in the current line-up, is testament indeed to the original design.

OK; an HW95 will do everything this will, in a slicker package if you want my honest opinion, but for that bit of retro styling, and a link to some serious airgun heritage, the HW35 won't disappoint.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Model	Weihrauch HW35K (sporter)
Type	Spring-powered break-barrel
Calibre	.22 on test/.177 available
Weight	8.4lbs
Length	43.25"
Barrel	16"
Stock	Beech sporter
Velocity	10-shot strings using:
	Air Arms Diabolo Field:
	High 581fps
	Low 578
	Ave 580
	Spread 3fps
Energy	11.9ft/lbs
Trigger	2-stage adjustable (Rekord unit)
Price	£302
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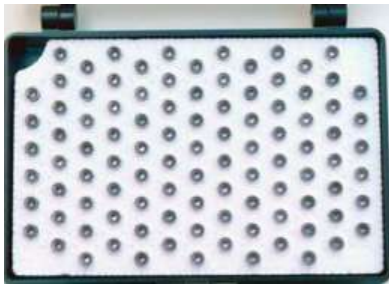

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QUANTUM LEAP

Pete Moore revisits a rifle make he has not looked at for many years and finds some things have changed for the better and what was good before has been retained

Steyr Mannlicher for me really means three sporting rifles – the SSG 69, the Scout and the ProHunter; of these it's the last that is perhaps the most general product. The SSG is more a sniper/precision option that used to be the preferred bolt-gun for those shooting Practical Rifle pre-1988. The Scout well probably one of the most radical designs ever offering a number of features that made it in some ways a go anywhere do anything bolt-action. I owned one for six years and really liked it. The ProHunter; sadly a design let down by its synthetic stock, which was far too flimsy, as it uses the exact same SBS (Safe Bolt System) feed and action as the Scout.

Steyr apparently tried to beef up the stock a bit but with limited success and though liking what the ProHunter offered mechanically and having tested a few versions I would not bother. Well things have changed considerably as what is pretty much the same gun as before is now fielded with vastly improved furniture that makes it the design it always promised to be. Now called the CL II, which is the wood-stocked version it's also available in a synthetic option - the

SBS safety system, here we see it in SAFE locked bolt mode, note the cocked action indicator

SX - which is where we really see the differences between it and the old ProHunter!

BETTER BY FAR

On test is a CL II SX in 243 Winchester, which really impressed me no end! In truth nothing has changed apart from the stock, but that is the thing that makes the real difference. However the SBS action is just that bit different from say a Remy 700 or similar as we shall see!

The SBS action and look blends both old and modern aspects of Steyr rifles in general. The closed-topped receiver shows a generous ejection port that allows reasonably easy single loading. The barrel is distinctive with their trade mark, spiral, cold, hammer-forged finish, this the Standard model shows a light/medium, 22" tube and no iron sights. I imagine that this has been done for the UK as we do not use irons that much, and it's ready threaded ½ x 20 UNF with a thread protector.

Calibre choice in the Standard is: 243 Win, 6.5x55 Swedish, 270 Win, 7x64, 30-06, 308 Win, 8x57 and 9.3x62. Model options include: Magnum calibres, Mountain, Semi Weight, Light/fluted and Stainless steel. Rifles are identical with the exceptions of weight and barrel length; for example the Magnum weighs 7.5 lbs with a 25" barrel, whereas the Mountain is 7.3 lbs with a 20" tube. The Standard's is 22" and well suited for popular UK calibres 243/308 Win.

ROCK-N-ROLLER!

The SBS action shows a big bolt with cut-outs to stop the build up of dirt etc. binding the action. It locks by a 4-lug (twin-opposed) bolt at the front, which engages directly with the chamber extension,

The CL II SX offers a sleek and practical action, note hammer-forged barrel and butter knife bolt handle, scope is a Zeiss Duralyt 3-12x50

which takes all the pressure. At the rear is a shroud with a cocked action indicator pin that protrudes. The handle is called a 'butter knife' style due to its shape, as such is has no knob just a flattened/widened end, which works very well. It also stands proud of the side of the stock so is easy to grasp even with heavy gloves on.

The safety is tang-mounted and consists of a roller wheel, which is ideally placed for firing hand thumb operation without disturbing the grip. It goes like this – red dot FIRE, roll it back and a white dot appears - SAFE with bolt operation, roll it back again and a grey catch flicks up – SAFE bolt locked. To disengage this you have to push the button down and roll it forward, in this position it also allows you to push the bolt handle down to lock it out too as well as bolt removal. It's a clever system!

The trigger is a 'single set' mechanism and as standard offers a break of around 4 lbs, which is firm without being too heavy and good for most needs. At the front of the blade is an Allan screw that adjusts the weight should you wish. However, this can be further reduced by cocking the action and pushing the blade forward to 'set' it for an ultra light pull. This is scarily light and once with my Scout I nearly came a cropper as I was waiting for a deer and forgot I had put the set on. The animal appeared and as I was coming up my finger brushed the trigger and the gun fired! Luckily for all concerned I did not hit the deer or anything else, but it scared the hell out of me. Now I restrict using any set facility to on the range and for zeroing only; be warned!

TAKING STOCK

Feed is from a polymer, 4-round, detachable box magazine with integral/ambidextrous caches in the base plate. Typically it's marked as to calibres in this case 243/308 Win, 7mm-08, 260 Rem and 338 Federal all using the same generic 308 head size and cartridge overall length. The magazine has twin engagements hooks so if you want to single load the mag can be lowered about 1/8" in the well where it won't feed but will ▶

Steyr's CL II XS takes the ProHunter action and drops it into a really good synthetic stock

FOR
Well made and shootable
They finally got the stock right

AGAINST
Watch out for that set trigger as it's light

VERDICT
Overall an excellent hunting rifle
Good build quality
Great safety system

The CL II no matter wood or synthetic stock is a slick looking and handling hunter, note the rubber gripping inserts

be locked. To re-engage the feed just slap it fully home.

Now on to the CL II's defining feature - the SX stock. At first glance it has a more modern and sleek look to it than the original ProHunter design, though now has black rubber gripping panels on the pistol grip and forend which counter points its olive green colour. At the back is a generous recoil pad. The butt shows a straight comb with a slight, R/H palm swell. The forend is rectangular in section and tapers towards the angled tip and offers a decent free-float on the barrel. It flexes a bit, but then again don't they all? But off a bipod, stick or high seat rail the barrel is not influenced in any way. The integral trigger guard is massive, which I really like as there's no problem getting a heavy gloved trigger finger inside!

Inside is another pleasant surprise as the CL II has an integral, aluminium bedding block. All of this combining with the better stock design offers a significant improvement in consistency and accuracy potential over the original ProHunter. All metal work shows a phosphate-type grey finish which is both non-reflective and suits the green/black furniture.

Watch out for that set trigger, super light; maybe a bit too much for the rigours of hunting!

SHOOTER!

For testing I teamed up the rifle with a Zeiss 3-12x50 Duralyt scope in 30mm Warne rings and bases, a Harris BRS bipod and a Hardy Gen IIII reflex moderator. Ammo went to three choices – Hornady's 80-grain GMX and 70-grain SST (super shock tip) both in the higher velocity Superformance loadings. Plus GECO's 105-grain soft point; generally speaking in most sporting 243s weights above 100-grains don't stabilise well in the twist rate, but if they do then it would have some potential.

From experience I have found that a 22" barrel in 243 Winchester is the entry level length as this calibre is quite velocity/length sensitive, certainly with lighter bullets. Figures were most pleasing with all loads used! The GECO was averaging 2932 fps/2013 ft/lbs and shooting ¾" @ 100 metres. Though the slowest of the three it retained energy better down range at 300 yards it was producing 1343 ft/lbs.

The GMX can be funny as it uses a non-lead, hollow point with a ballistic tipped monolithic build that does not stabilise that well in some barrels. In the Steyr it proved good averaging 3273 fps/1916 ft/lbs and shooting under the inch. At 300 yards energy was 972 ft/lbs. Finally the 75-grain SST at 3377 fps/1913 ft/lbs again just under the inch an at 300 it did 963 ft/lbs. 300 yards is probably a sensible distance for the 243, certainly for deer and goes to show the difference between the medium/fast loads and the heavier/slower options.

Ballistics' aside, which I thought good for a 243; the CL II SX impressed me as a rifle no end. Well made, bags of accuracy potential and great ergonomics, it's a tad heavier than some guns in this calibre, which I liked as it offers more stability. Truth is there's not a lot to dislike!

Ammo did impress left to right: GECO 105-grain SP, Hornady 80-grain GMX and 75-grain SST both in Superformance

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Name	Steyr CL II SX
Calibre	243 Win (on test)
Capacity	4 (DM)
Barrel	22"
Length	43.9"
Weight	7.4 lbs
Price	£1,084.00 There's a surcharge for magnum calibres
Contact	Sportsman Gun Centre Ltd, 01392 354854 www.sportsmanguncentre.com

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MODEL SHOWN: CL II MOUNTAIN SX HALF STOCK

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Standard Calibres	£1,120.99
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MODEL SHOWN: CL II STAINLESS HALF STOCK

RIFLE SCOPE NOT INCLUDED

MODEL SHOWN: SM12 HALF STOCK

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MODEL SHOWN: SM12 SX HALF STOCK

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Taking Stock

Pete Moore looks at two rather different stocks from Norway and the USA and finds much to like

Though Jackson Rifles is perhaps best known for their range of moderators they have more than one string to their bow. Amongst these are rifle stocks with probably one of the most respected names in the business - McMillan. The other is KKC - perhaps less well known - and comes from Norway but is none the less an exceptional design and offers a laminate build.

Mc THUMBHOLE

Though not for every use I'm a fan of thumbhole (TH) furniture and McMillan's TH, which uses a fibre glass build, does not disappoint. It's what I would term as the classic, Fajen or Lazzeroni-style with a straight line comb and roll over cheekpiece. The pistol grip flares at the base and offers a solid hand stop position, with large panels of chequering as well as on the forend. The thumb/hand cut out is generous and serves to position your hand and arm easily. It comes with a 1" Decelerator recoil pad and offers a length of pull (LOP) of 14". The forend is what I would term as a medium build with enough depth and girth to get a good grip, without being overly large.

McMillan offers a number of finishes from solid colours to camos; the TH wears a moulded-in pattern called Woodland Spectre, which consists of a green base with multiple flecks of grey and ochre. Being moulded in the finish is a lot tougher than a coat of paint too. Finished off with QD sling studs it's available in long and short action options for a wide choice of actions from basic to a fully inletted drop-in.

KKC

The KKC offers just one model, which seems to cover all the bases and is made of Stratoboard birch laminate and feels like a TH without the connecting strap. The butt shows a large cut-out underneath, which reduces weight and bulk and offers a grasping hook if you are shooting supported. The top is in two parts - a low, integral T-section spine that accepts a soft polymer, height-adjustable cheekpiece/comb. The butt plate shows a deep rubber recoil backed with three, removable spacers to adjust LOP and pad height, which measured 14". Extra spacers are available!

The grip is reminiscent of the GRS-style though KKC pre-dates that company by a few years; it feels like a thumbhole and has a thumb-up slot to the left, which proved very comfortable. The forend is wide and parallel sided, almost with a beavertail feel but tappers on the underside to a rounded tip. This does feel good in the supporting hand; textured panels along the sides and the pistol grip provide a secure surface. A QD sling stud is fitted at the front with a rotary QD swivel at the back in the butt cut out. Being laminate you have a generous choice of colours; this example showed a black, grey and tan pattern. In a wide range of inlets you will not be disappointed should you want something both practical and a bit different.

FOR
McMillan
a classic
thumbhole design

KKC a practical
modern design
for most needs

AGAINST
Not a lot

VERDICT
Either make has
a lot to offer

Good handling
and shootability

Classic McMillan Lazzeroni-style TH stock; the moulded-in pattern is called Woodland Spectre and offers a tough finish

KKC laminate, note the butt layout and adjustable comb and LOP; a most practical modern design

{ TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS }

- **Name: McMillan TH – £494**
  KKC - £435
- **Contact: Jackson Rifles,**
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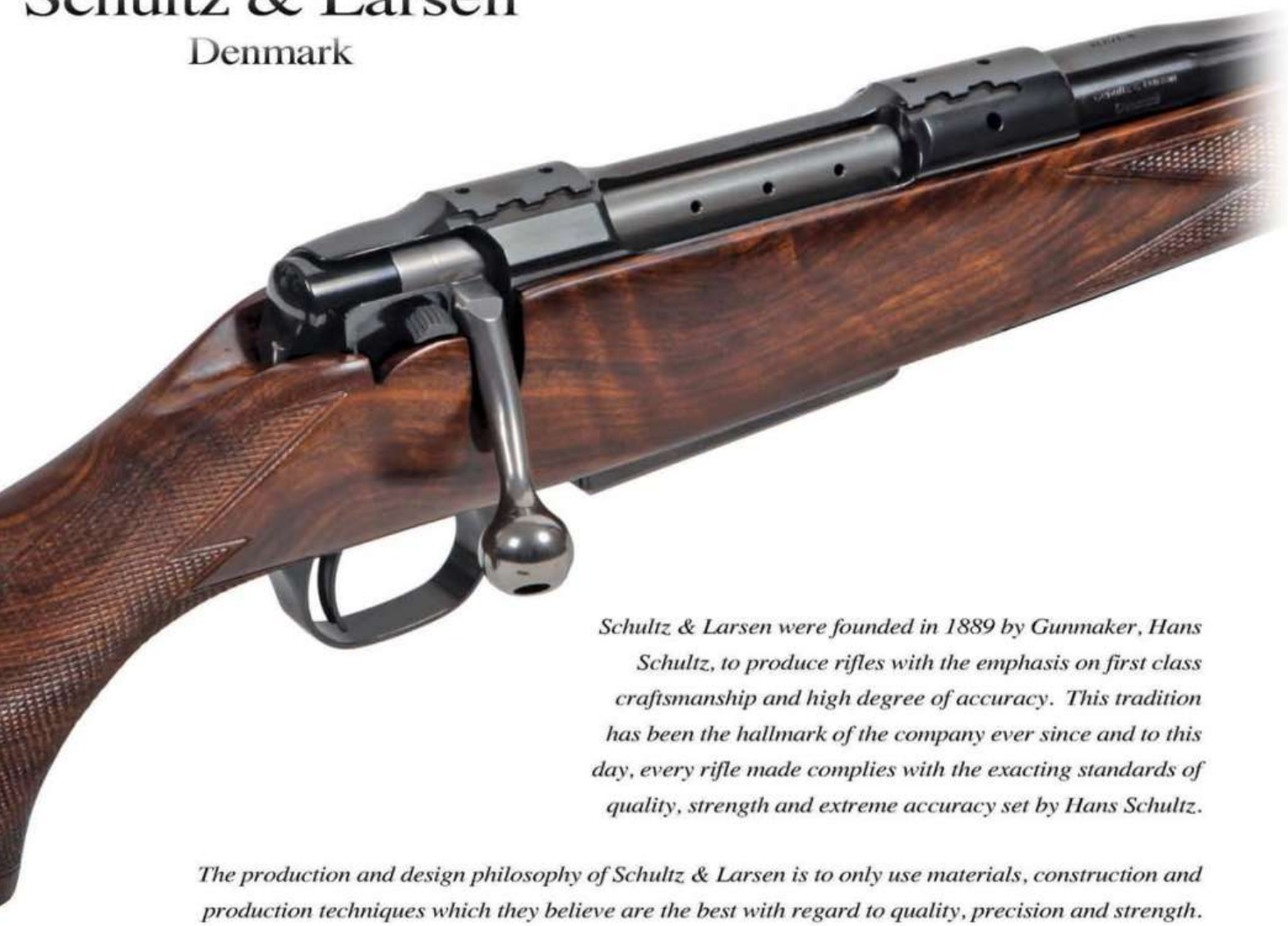
Schultz & Larsen
Denmark



Schultz & Larsen were founded in 1889 by Gunmaker, Hans Schultz, to produce rifles with the emphasis on first class craftsmanship and high degree of accuracy. This tradition has been the hallmark of the company ever since and to this day, every rifle made complies with the exacting standards of quality, strength and extreme accuracy set by Hans Schultz.

The production and design philosophy of Schultz & Larsen is to only use materials, construction and production techniques which they believe are the best with regard to quality, precision and strength. Everything that looks like steel and should be steel is made of steel.

They are the only hunting rifle producer that choose to use cut rifled barrels. Every barrel is produced from completely straight and stress relieved chrome molybdenum steel, carefully bored and cut rifled with the minimum stress on the steel. Every barrel is internally polished with an individually cast tin lap and grinding compound to produce perfect uniform smoothness. All of this creates a rifle that produces maximum precision under all conditions, a factor that makes top international shooters choose Schultz & Larsen barrels.

Schultz & Larsen
Denmark

Schultz & Larsen were quick to realise the potential of sound moderators. Silencing the report of the rifle is good for the environment, increases the precision of the rifle and reduces the risk of hearing damage.

Unusually, for a rifle maker at least, Schultz & Larsen have chosen to design and manufacture their own moderators. In doing so they have set the same standards for performance demanded of their rifles.

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TIME FLIES WHEN YOU'RE SHOOTING CSR

Graham Allen's been shooting CSR competitions for the last three years; let's see how he's been getting on.

They say that time flies when you're having fun and that's certainly been the case since I took up shooting Civilian Service Rifle (CSR)! It's hard to believe it was January 2102 that I took part in my first competition; I wrote a piece for Shooting Sports, detailing my first outing and even though I didn't do particularly well, I was hooked as soon as I began shooting. A great bunch of guys (and a couple of ladies too) and an exciting discipline using the type of rifles I like the most i.e. straight-pull AR15 and similar military rifles; what's not to like?

WEATHER ASIDE

OK, so the weather could be a bit better but the league runs from October one year until April the next and as we shoot at Bisley it's hardly going to be warm and sunny, now is it? We've been blessed with some lovely days though but also a couple of real shockers, where it's poured down as soon as we arrived and carried on until we left. However, that's what modern waterproof clothing's for and there really isn't any excuse these days for being too uncomfortable. It's also been bloody cold now and then but once again, decent jackets, trousers and a good base layer really help. I'm amazed when I hear fully grown blokes moan that they're cold,

The author's straight-pull FAL was a bit of a handful with full-power reloads

I had the original heavy barrel on my Speedmaster turned down

what do they want, their Mums to make sure they're warm enough, like little kids?

The mud seems to be largely a thing of the past though, as the NRA has invested a lot of money improving the ranges. Short Siberia, where we shoot at shorter distances, now has a nice layer of shingle all the way from the 100 yard firing point, down to the turning targets, which is much better for the run-downs. Century has also benefitted from some extensive drainage works, so the swamp we used to run through is now a distant memory and we're not slipping and sliding all over the place, which has got to be good for range safety.

KIT IMPROVEMENTS

The shooting conditions have obviously improved but what about the kit I've been using? Well, I no longer use my straight-pull FAL in competition, I decided to get my Southern Gun Company Speedmaster out instead and it was a wise decision. It's longer and heavier than the FAL but ergonomically it's better and as it fires 5.56mm ammo instead of 7.62mm, it's cheaper to feed and recoils less, so I'm back on aim quicker. I'd been reloading for the FAL, using 168-grain Sierra Match Kings; 69 grain .224 calibre Sierras are much cheaper than their larger counterparts and I'm using roughly half the powder per round. It's usually around 100 rounds per day, so the savings soon start to add up. A lot of competitors use 77 grain SMKs but my Speedmaster loves the 69s and I bought loads of them years ago, so I'll stick with them for the time being.

I don't always use my own finely crafted fodder though and have used RUAG and GGG NATO spec ammo quite a bit over the last three years. I used homeloads almost exclusively during the last season but for the last couple of matches I used GGG and had some of my best scores ever! Peter Cottrell, the NRA's Head of Shooting and Competitions, uses military issue 5.56mm NATO ammo exclusively and he seems to wipe the floor with most people in his class. So maybe it's the 'nut behind the butt' that's important but I do wonder what he'd be like with even better ammo?

FRIGHTFUL OLD BORE!

I hate to think how many rounds my Speedmaster has shot, it's 15 years old now and I must have fired at least 10,000-rounds, maybe 12,000! Many shooters replace their barrels long before this, at around 5-6000 but the DPMS 1 in 8 Match tube is still putting 10 x 69 grain SMKs into 1½" at 100 yards and that's plenty good enough for CSR! Fair enough, I'd love it to be doing ½ MOA like it did originally but I seem to be doing OK in competition at the moment, so I'll leave it alone. I'm sure it will give up the ghost during a comp one day and spray the bullets all over the place. But I've certainly had my money's worth out of it - barrels are, after all, a consumable.

One thing I did do last year was to have my gunsmith mate reduce the diameter of the barrel, by turning down the front two thirds. I now have a much slimmer profile and I've lost 1Lb 2oz off the front end, which certainly helps balance! I now no longer have to work so hard when shooting standing stages and my scores have improved. I kept the 'pepper pot' type muzzle brake, as it's really effective and why pay more to replace a perfectly good item?

The handguard is still the Hogue free float tube that I specified all those years ago. I've seen quadrails come and go over the years and they always seemed uncomfortable to hold without rail covers fitted and too bulky with them. The new generation of slim handguards are much nicer though and something like the Samson Evolution may find its way onto my rifle one of these days.

Unfortunately I had to install different springs in my JP Enterprises match trigger to increase the pull weight; as before the modification, it wasn't heavy enough to meet

The Vortex Strike Eagle looks to be an excellent CSR optic

Graham Allen competing with his Speedmaster - here it still wears the full, heavy, fluted barrel

A 10-shot, 100 yard group with 69 grain Sierra Match Kings, not too shabby for such an old barrel

5.56mm ammo is a lot cheaper than 7.62mm

the minimum pull weight of 4.5lbs. It really went against the grain to make a trigger worse but 'Service Optic' class forbids anything lighter. It's quite a bit heavier than the minimum but I'm used to it now, so I'll probably leave it as it is.

BETTER BUTT

Another thing I've changed is the standard plastic butt pad for an adjustable model; it's allowed me to extend the length of pull an inch or so and also to alter the height of the pad. It's now much better than before and I'm amazed at how slippery the standard M16 item is, a bit of rubber certainly helps secure the rifle in the shoulder. There are various fully adjustable butts available and the Magpul PRS is especially nice but at around £300 they're a bit pricy, they're very popular with fellow competitors but I think one will have to wait a while.

I've been using the same scope for pretty much as long as I've had the rifle; it's an old and now discontinued 30mm-tubed Deben 2.5-10 X 50 with target turrets and a sidewheel parallax adjustment. It's pretty much bombproof and it's never lost zero or malfunctioned in any way and in short I just trust it. I don't need anything higher than x4.5 mag though, or such a massive front lens for that matter, so something with a lower mag and smaller objective should logically be on top. However, after losing weight from the barrel it's not quite so front heavy and it's actually quite handy being able to shoot on x10 mag when testing ammo etc.

Deben's new optic line is called Hawke and the nearest model to it is the Endurance 30 2.5-10x50. I really like the look of some of the Nightforce and Schmidt & Bender tactical scopes but at over £2,000 each I think they'll have to stay as dreams! The new Vortex Strike Eagle 1-6 X 24 looks very interesting at around £270 and I'll hopefully be trying one soon.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Well, I've loved the last 3 years competing in the best discipline around and I can't see me giving up CSR anytime soon. I've done pretty well in the league, coming 8th, 14th then 11th over the three seasons. Most importantly though my scores are getting better, so I'm beating myself, even if my league positions have gone up and down a bit. Next season, just for a change, I'll be trying my hand with a higher mag scope and a bipod for some matches, so only time will tell how I get on.

CONTACTS:

Speedmaster rifles – Southern Gun Co, 01208 851074
www.southern-gun.co.uk
Sierra bullets – Henry Krank & Co Ltd, 0113 256 9163
Vortex Optics – Www.vortexoptics.com (for nearest dealer)
Hawke optics - Deben Group Industries, 01394 387762

Graham's Speedmaster is a bit of an antique but still performs well, note the slimmed down barrel that improves handling

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Get a Grip!

Looking for a new handle for your AR-based rifle then check these two out

"There are so many after-market pistol grips deigned to fit the AR15 lower the choice is staggering"

There are so many after-market pistol grips deigned to fit the AR15 lower the choice is staggering; well here are two more to consider! First up a familiar design from MFT – the Engage Tactical Pistol Grip (EPGI16). It follows the Magpul M1AD design with a main frame complete with extended, fill-in back strap extension to give more support to the web of the hand to give a better trigger finger position. Add in three different shaped front and back, slide-on straps and a water-proof storage compartment with rubber divider and it's a good un'. It comes with pins to retain the front and back straps securely and overall it's a practical design. A bit simpler is the Trinity Force WBG06 that looks not unlike the FAB Defence unit (top left). It's a simpler, one-piece build with three finger grooves for added stability and the same extended back strap as the Engage though with a hinged storage compartment. The surface is textured on the back strap and between the finger grooves too.

FOR
Two different but useful grips

AGAINST
Not a lot

VERDICT
Engage more versatile but costs more
WBG06 good design and cheaper

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SS11.15/33/f

Howa 1500 Varmint in GRS Sport Varmint stock – a winning combination

GOOD Keeps Getting BETTER!

When it comes down to good, old fashioned value for money in a rifle then I'd stick my neck out and say that you can't beat a Howa 1500. But it's not just about money as what's on offer is most impressive too and available in both short and long action options as well as barrel and model choices.

Howas are imported and distributed in the UK by Highland Outdoors and as well as the individual models they offers stocks from Hogue, Howa themselves, Bell & Carlson, Knox and also GRS (Grodas Rifle Stocks) of Norway. Add to this the option of blued or stainless finishes and even box magazine conversion kits for the short action calibres to. Highland also offers total packages that can come complete with a Nikko Stirling scope, mounts, and their Sonic moderators along with your choice of stock. One of the models that has always impressed me is the Varmint.

GRETA DESIGN

I first tested a 223 Rem version many years ago and it was a good one – 22" heavy barrel, 1-12" twist, threaded ½ x 20 UNF and the action dropped into a very nice Howa thumbhole (T/H) stock with heavy free-float forend and ventilation slots. The build is a bit like a Remington Model 700 crossed with a Winchester Model 70 and as standard comes with a top-loading, bottom dump, floor plate magazine system. The bolt handle angles back slightly and features a 3-position safety at the rear right of the action – forward - FIRE, middle - SAFE with bolt operation and fully rearwards FULL SAFE (bolt locked).

Back then I think the price of the Varmint was £699 and for a 223 that shot easy ½" groups that was a stone cold bargain. The yard stick at that time was Remington's 700 Varmint series typified by the VSSF (varmint synthetic stainless fluted), which as I recall cost at least £1200. In the USA Howa cleaned up with many comments on the various web sites and forums to the effect of; why should I buy Remington when the Howa is just as good and a whole lot cheaper; I could not argue with that either!

The rifle on test is another Varmint but just a little special. The stainless action shows a heavy, plain 24" barrel threaded ½ x 20 UNF chambered in 308 Winchester. The real difference is the fact it comes from Highland Outdoors in a GRS stock, which really is a fine piece of design and

Pete Moore checks out a rather shootable Howa 1500 and looks at what you can do to improve things across the board

The standard, floor plate mag system is more than adequate for most needs

Detail of the GRS Sport Varmint butt layout and adjustment

The barrel channel is open enough to handle most diameters for a free-float

Original 1500 Varmint in 223 Rem; brilliant rifle note the Howa TH stock, which is also a great bit of furniture!

engineering as well shall see! The model here is the Sporter Varmint though there are a number of other options; this one does seem to be the most popular in the UK though. Their Adjustable Hunting is very similar with just a bit of a change in the butt layout. They are both full sized builds and can add a bit of weight to the rifle, GRS has this covered as they offer both models in what they call the Decima option which reduces the weight and dimension by 10% overall.

PRESS AND PULL

The real beauty of the GRS is that it's fully adjustable. Made of high quality Stratoboard laminate it's available in a choice of colours, the one on test is in what they call their Green Mountain Camo. I have one of these on my custom 6.5 Creedmoor, which uses a Weatherby Vanguard action.

The butt is adjustable for length of pull (LOP) by a large press button in the side and will cater for most people large or small. It's finished off with a Limb Saver recoil pad, optional is a sliding plate so you can fine tune your shoulder position as to pad height. The comb/cheek piece uses the same push button method too. Suffice to say it's really easy to set up and does improve your shooting position no end.

But we are not finished yet. The underside of the butt is cut out to form a grasping hook at the rear, which is an ideal support when shooting off a bipod or bag. Something else you soon learn to appreciate is the off-set and scalloped out pistol grip that rotates your hand by 6° from vertical. It may not sound much but it just de-stresses your firing hand position. The forend is full but gently tapered and is free-floated for most barrel diameters and the action inlet is 100% finished so your barrelled/action can drop straight in.

BED IF YOU LIKE

Though I had my Sport Varmint bedded, this example was not and it shot well enough. Another option worth consideration is the box magazine conversion kit. Normally this sort of extra will set you back a good few hundred quid, but the one Highland does is made of polymer as are the 5 & 10-shot magazine options. OK it's not steel or alloy but I have never had any issues with feed or function and either magazine capacity is £54.99 with the replacement floor plate

The box mag kit offers 5 and 10-round capacities, here we see the Green Mountain Camo stock on my 6.5 Creedmoor custom

being £44.99 so sub-£100, which is well under what a metal set-up would cost! I have been using mine for around 5-years with no problems!

The one thing I would say about this kit is the manufacture has placed the release catch forward and it's not protected/covered in any way. One problem I found if you are shooting off a rail it's easy enough to slide the rifle forward and inadvertently trip the catch. At the moment the conversion kit is only for short-action calibres. The magazine kit is better used on the range as the standard floor plate magazine is more than adequate for hunting!

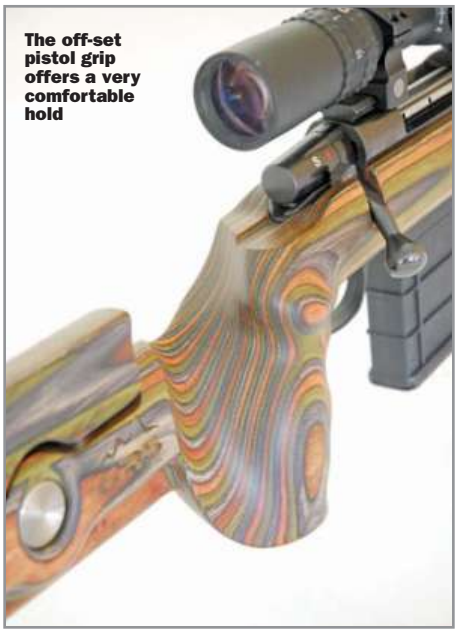
The test rifle was loaned to me by a friend who fitted it up with a Night Force 3-15 x 56 scope in a Howa, one-piece rail and rings. Up front a Hardy Gen IIII moderator with a Harris BRS bipod underneath. He mainly uses it for hunting, but for the range test I used Hornady 168-grain A-MAX, which for a 308-type target round is hard to beat.

WINDING INTO IT!

The GRS/Howa Varmint makes a very comfortable and stable shooting combination. Setting up LOP and head supports takes literally seconds and as you make your firing hand grip you can't fail to appreciate the position offered. I think I could best describe it as a sort of thumbhole-type layout without the top strap on the cut out, such is the feel!

With what is a medium/heavy combination, recoil in 308 is comfortable, especially with the moderator fitted. Accuracy was good and with the standard trigger, which breaks pleasingly crisply at around 3-4 lbs the rifle was shooting an average of ¾". Out of interest my Weatherby Vanguard is actually made by Howa so things like the stock inlet and magazine kit will fit either rifle.

With that in mind I fitted a Rifle Basixs drop-in for the Howa/Vanguard. There are two – WTHBY-1 is factory



The off-set pistol grip offers a very comfortable hold

set at 2.5lbs and adjustable from 1.5-4 lbs and WTHBY-V (varmint) set at 14oz and adjustable from 12oz – 1.5 lbs. Fitting is simple and whatever you opt for it will make a difference!

This then is the beauty of the Howa as it's such a popular rifle there are any number of accessories for it. Equally if you have a 1500 already you can buy the GRS stock from Highland as a separate item and fit it yourself or get it pillar and synthetic bedded by your gunsmith. Or if you don't want to spend £529.99, which might be a bit much you could opt for one of Howa's thumbhole stocks as you can get the Fajen-style which is dedicated for right handers or their Ambidextrous both costing around £250.

Regardless of what you do as can be seen the Howa 1500 is quite some rifle and has got you covered for most calibres and uses along with a load of accessories that will certainly improve the shootability of your rifle no end!

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Name	Howa 1500 Varmint/GRS
Calibre	308 Win (on test)
Action	turn bolt
Finish	stainless steel
Barrel	heavy plain 24" threaded ½ x 20 UNF
GRS	Sport Varmint Stock
Adjustable	LOP and comb
Price	£1499
	Box magazine conversion kit £44.99, magazines £54.99
	Howa T/H stock £249.99
	GRS Sport/Varmint stock £529.99
Contact	Highland Outdoors Ltd, 0845 099 0252
	Rifle Basixs triggers - Contact: South Yorkshire Shooting Supplies, 01226 756332

Right - original Howa 1500 trigger, which is pretty good, left Rifle Basixs unit, which is just that bit more

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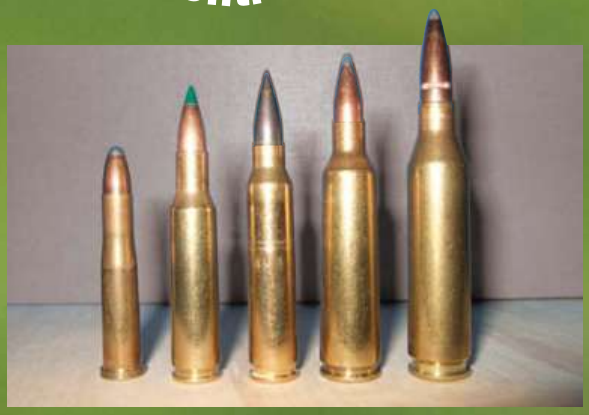
The Right Choices



Fox favourites: left to right – 22 Hornet (not deer legal), 222, 223 & 22-250 Rem (also small deer legal) and the 243 Win (small and large deer legal) if I could only have one calibre I know what I would choose!

Howard Heywood presents a practical guide to would be foxing enthusiasts

Fox control is an art and as I have said before they are one of the smartest and quick learning animals you're ever likely to come across. Anybody can get permission (if they try) on a patch of ground to help perfect the knowledge and skills needed to help keep numbers under control. From July onwards is the best time to go it alone if you want a real confidence booster that is, even if you have managed to team up with someone who has a few years experience. You still can't beat that challenge of you and the fox, which is what brings so many to the sport.

SELF SUFFICIENT!

If you're wondering why I say July onwards it's because the cubs are self sufficient but still lack the experience of what may pose a threat and what may not, so increasing your chances of success. This does not mean it's like shooting fish in a barrel, as with every passing day their knowledge also builds. But at this age you may get a second chance if you happen to mess things up. I have written so much about foxing, so now is the time to pull out all the old Shooting Sports magazines and pick up as much as you can from the articles.

One of the things I get asked most is what calibre is the right one for foxing? Most people would say it's personal preference but that would be wrong! I say it's the land that determines your choice and how much shooting you intend to do. For instance if all you have are some small holdings or rough scrub ground were your range is limited then a 22 Hornet would probably be all you need. In fact your local fire arms officer would guide you in that direction. However if you have more ground and distance then a 222 or 223 Rem is a good choice, both offering an effective range of 200 to 300 yards in the right hands!

6MM SOLUTION

However, as most fox control is at night the maximum range you would be taking a fox even with a top scope is 150 yards then both

The 22 Hornet keeps coming in and out of fashion, it packs a real punch for a small round pushing out a 45-grain bullet at 2690 fps or 3100 fps using a 35 grain

The 222 Rem loaded with a 50-grain bullet travels at 3100 fps increasing to 3450 fps with a 40- grain

The 22-250 Rem packs a real punch; traveling at 3500 fps using a 60-grain and 3900 fps with a 40- grain

HOWARD HEYWOOD SAYS:

"The advantage here is the rifle will be lighter so easy to carry if you are doing the job on foot"

calibres are perfect. But if your thinking of combining foxing with deer stalking then move up to a 6mm, with the 243 Winchester being by far the most popular and for that matter useful! A 243 firing a 70-grain bullet is a perfect foxing round; flat shooting low recoil if any and you can switch up to a heavier bullet for deer.

One calibre I don't think I will ever own is a 22-250 Rem, my reasons are simple and are based around maximum effective range. The 22-250 is powerful but what's the point of having something that's flat shooting up to 300 yards or more. The noise level is now nothing to worry about there's plenty of sound moderators out there. Economy too, as I reload and can get near one half times as many of the smaller calibres out of a tub of powder than I can a 22-250. Plus it's only small deer legal too!

HARDWARE

Once you decide which calibre is right for you, your next decision is what rifle, or how much it weighs! If you intend to shoot mainly from a vehicle you could opt for a heavier, varmint-type barrel, which will be more consistent as it does not heat up so quickly. However, a sporter-weight barrel will get hotter quicker, but in truth I doubt if you will be shooting lots of ammo. The advantage here is the rifle will be lighter so easy to carry if you are doing the job on foot; an important consideration as you will also be carrying a lamp and probably a set of sticks etc.

But how many shots are you going to take at a fox or foxes in quick succession? I can go out some nights and not fire one round and as 95% of my foxing is on foot the last thing I want is extra weight over my shoulder.

I shoot, I don't just write about it. I've had rifles, pistols and even black powder guns and am long past the stage where I would see or read about a calibre and go out and buy a gun just to be able to try it out!

FIELD PROVEN

The rifles and equipment I have now are good practical and reliable, not show things I only take out in dry weather! It does not worry me if I only pay £200 for a second hand rifle as long as it shoots straight. The most expensive bit of kit I own is a Maxi Kite NV scope that I bought off someone for £2,200. He had it fitted to a Rapid 7 air rifle; seems a bit over kill to me!

If your applying for your firearms certificate and wondering which calibre to apply for or what would suit your needs best, I hope this and previous articles help you to decide pointing you in the right direction. But whatever you decide, a call to your local fire arms licensing officer will go a long way in starting a good relationship. Tell them your intensions and ask their opinion even if you have made up your mind on what calibre you've set your heart on.

The 223 Rem is capable of 3000 fps with a 60-grain bullet and 3600 fps with a 40 grain

Last but not least; the 243 Win has a wider range of bullet weights from 55-grain at 3800 fps to 100-grain at 29100fps.

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Puffa, Puffa

Want that extra edge when the wind is up then Napier has the answer

A hunters two biggest problems when stalking are noise and smell! The average human exhales 10,000-litres of scent a day and as we all know sounds carries too. Both being exacerbated by wind direction, which is like a natural early warning system for deer and other animals. OK the idea is to get down wind of your quarry but that's not always possible, however with Napier's new APEX AirGlo it's possible to check wind direction and adjust for it. The idea is simple and consists of a small, puffer bottle that is filled with 40-grams of a non toxic and non-staining, odourless powder; a bit like talc. So as you are stalking you can flip up the cap, give it a squeeze and a small amount will puff out and it will act as a wind direction indicator, to a degree it will also give you an idea of its speed too. It can also be used as a trail marker as it's not water-soluble, to retrace your route or even mark the spot where an animal has run into cover or similar. Packaged in a soft neoprene, camo sleeve with a belt clip and lanyard, easy and silent to use, it's an interesting and practical item for the serious hunter!

"So as you are stalking you can flip up the cap, give it a squeeze and a small amount will puff out and it will act as a wind direction indicator"

FOR
Handy and useful

AGAINST
Not a lot

VERDICT
A practical addition to your hunting gear

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Economy & Accuracy

Pete Moore looks at what some might see as a contradiction in terms – steel-cased target ammo - but hold on, he will explain all...

Steel-cased ammunition has been in use for many years and was probably invented by the Germans and or the Russians prior to or in World War II. It was originally an economy measure as steel is a lot cheaper than brass and is capable of being formed (drawn) into a cartridge case. The real problem is lubrication as brass is soft and can self-lubricate; not so steel, which needs some form of coating to improve primary extraction. Traditionally this was achieved with a lacquer and anyone who has seen a Communist Bloc (Com Bloc) 7.62x39mm round will recognise that smooth, greenish skin on the case.

Steel appeal; Hornady's new Steel Match – well priced and effective ammo

RUSSIAN INFLUENCE

Today we mainly encounter steel-cased ammo manufactured by countries from the old Warsaw Pact in a diverse range of calibres, in the UK the three most prolific are 7.62x54 R (rimmed) 7.62x39 and yes .223 Remington. Most are full metal jacket military ball-types and built for purpose, as in cheap fodder for blatting down the range. However, there was a small UK company who offered match ammo that they built with bought-in steel cases from Russia and the difference between that and their brass-cased ammo was insignificant.

This seems to be Hornady's approach as they are now offering a product called Steel Match that addresses the twin demons of economy and performance. Currently there are three loadings – in 233 Remington 55 and 75-grain and in 308 Winchester a 155-grain. There are three bullets options boat tailed hollow point (BTHP) match, hollow point (HP) and FMJ, which from my experience are proven performers in terms of accuracy. A steel case supplies the economy and we are told it's polymer-coated for reliable primary extraction.

BERDAN – WHY NOT?

The head stamp is simple with HMC (Hornady Manufacturing Company) with the calibre opposite. However, it seemed unlikely that Hornady would invest in making steel cases and what clinched this was the fact that this ammo is all Berdan-primed. Let me explain; there are two priming systems Boxer which uses a single, central flash hole with the anvil integral to the primer cup; and Berdan, which has the anvil integral to the primer pocket with twin, off-set flash holes and was mainly a military product. Com Bloc and PRC (Peoples Republic of China) ammo usually use corrosive primers, which do little for the bore if left un-cleaned.

My guess - primed cases are brought in, looking at the ammo I'd say they are made in Russia by Barnaul who produce a huge range of steel-cased ammo, they also use Hornady bullets in their own Centaur range of ammunition. The good news is primers are non-corrosive and I imagine the cases are as cheap as chips when bought in quantity, a saving that is passed on to the end user. Plus the rounds are assembled at the Hornady plant so quality is assured. Frankly I couldn't care less; all I want the ammo to do is work properly and Hornady has never disappointed on that front from my experience!

This is not ammo for the reloader; yes you can re-cycle steel cases but the biggest issue is de-capping, which is a pain as you need either a hydraulic or mechanical claw system. I know as I used to reload

Steel Match is available in 223 Rem (55 and 75-grain) and 308 Win (155-grain) in three bullet choices

FOR
Well priced and effective ammo

AGAINST
Not a lot
Not a viable reloading option

VERDICT
Decent ammo at good prices

steel 7.62x39 (pre-1988) for my semi-auto AK47 and I would not bother again! Plus re-sizing can wear away the lacquer coating and cause hard extraction!

50-COUNT

I was sent the 155-grain 308 Win and the 55-grain 223 Rem both in the BTHP loadings. Ammo comes in boxes of 50 in a polystyrene block. Pulling a cross section of the 223 Rem showed some good consistency with an average bullet weight of 54.7-grams with a maximum deviation of 0.6. The 308 Win went to 154.3-grains with a deviation of 0.8. Powder in both cases showed a fine grain with averages of 24.3 – 223 and 44-grains – 308 and deviations of 0.5 and 0.4 accordingly. Inspection showed a heavy roll crimp dead on the canellure of each bullet and both rounds proved a bugger to pull!

Bullet choice includes BTHP match, hollow point and FMJ

Testing was done with my 20" SGC Speedmaster straight-pull AR with a 1-8" twist and a Howa 1500 Varmint bolt-action, 1-10" twist and 24" tube. My 223 is a side cocker and proved reliable in this mode though and compared to a brass case; extraction was a tad firmer now and again, but not big deal either. I would say this: if you have a T-handle only gun then the Steel Match might cause some issues with primary extraction; bear in mind it was made for semi-auto rifles and not hybrids! There were no problems with the 308 at all! Accuracy was good with the 223 doing 0.5-0.75" and the 303 at a solid inch both at 100m.

NOT BAD AT ALL

Velocity; well I never expect any factory load will hit the numbers quoted as they always use long barrels for testing. Hornady always print the speeds and drops in 100 yard increments out to 500 yards on the box, which is useful. The 223 is quoted with a muzzle of 3240 fps, which is quick, the average was 2887 fps, with an extreme spread (ES) of 48 fps and a standard deviation (SD) of 27 fps. The 308 was nearer the money at an average of 2557 fps (quoted 2610 fps) ES 72 and SD 36. But as I said both shot well and I consider them two good and shootable examples of these calibres. Overall I like the Hornady Steel Match and for target shooting represents ammunition with potential and at the price I'd certainly invest in some for paper punching!

Steel cases are polymer-coated to improve primary extraction and stop corrosion and are Berdan-primed; they are not a practical reloading option!

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CONTACT:
Boyd's Stocks, CZ rifles, Ultimate Stalker moderator & Hornady ammunition: Edgar Brothers Ltd, 01625 613177

5-minute makeover

Pete Moore gives his 6.5 Grendel CZ custom a bit of a face lift courtesy of Edgar Brothers and Sports Match

New look for an old favourite; my CZ527 custom in 6.5 Grendel with Boyd's Varmint stock, Ultimate Foxer reflex moderator and Kahles 2.5-10x50 CT in Sports Match mounts

Not sure how long I've been shooting my 6.5 Grendel but it must be well over 6-years. I tested the calibre in a straight-pull AR15 and liked it, but reckoned I could get more out of it in a bolt gun as I could load to its full potential. It's a semi-custom job using a CZ527 action in 7.62x39 as the base, as the 6.5 is the same case head size. This mini Mauser action offers a compact gun and the build spec went for a PacNor 22" medium-weight tube and an HS Kevlar stock; Riflecraft put it together for me.

TAKING STOCK

Though a stable stock the HS was a bit cramped for me and I also made the mistake of giving it a camo finish! OK at the time I thought it looked cool but now; well I know it doesn't. One style of furniture I have always liked is the Thumbhole stock (T/H) and I had been looking around for one for my 527 for a long time with no success. Quite by chance I commented on this to Derek Edgar (Edgar Brothers CZ importer) recently and he told me that Boyd's Stocks in the USA now offer a couple of T/H options in laminate.

I soon had their Light and Heavy Varmint stocks on my desk for a look. They are identical with the exception of the forend as the Light shows less material up front in a slightly more tapered build, whereas the Heavy is wider and more rectangular in section. Both show side ventilation slots and wear two QD sling studs up front and one at the rear.

The high roll-over comb/cheekpiece and angled pistol grip makes for a great head position and fine hand hold

"One style of furniture I have always liked is the Thumbhole stock"

ONE SHADE OF GREY

The laminate is grey and black, which looks nice, the right hand T/H layout is classic Lazzeroni-style with a high, roll-over comb/cheekpiece, large and angled grip and a generous cut-out and is finished off with a rubber recoil pad. The action void is fully Inletted though the barrel channel is only cut for the standard contour tube, so my action would not fit in. No problem as by that time I had decided to get the Light Varmint and passed it and the rifle onto Riflecraft for some synthetic and pillar bedding and to open up the barrel channel for a free-float.

Laminate is an excellent stock material being dense and rigid so suffers none of the issues of wood in terms of variable stability due to humidity and temperature fluctuations. As to my choice both forends were rigid but I liked the slight weight reduction in the Light, which made the rifle a tad handier for unsupported shooting.

BACK AND SHOOTING

The Grendel came back and I was very pleased with the result, the support offered by the cheekpiece and comb gave good eye/scope alignment. Equally the long and shaped pistol grip with its big, thumb-through hole made for a lovely hold. Length of pull is a tad short, but nowhere near as short as the

FOR
Nice stock design

AGAINST
Only inlet for a standard barrel

VERDICT
Transforms shootability

HS Precision and it would not be a hard job to fit a deeper recoil pad.

Having gone this far I decided to carry on the makeover and in keeping with the light weight and compact build of the 527 I decided to replace my old, all-steel Ase Utra Compact moddy. In its place I substituted one of Edgars new Ultimate Foxer, reflex cans from Barton Gun Works. Light and compact it suited the build/calibre and offered effective moderation too!

RINGING THE CHANGES

My final change was the scope, as the Grendel had been fitted with my new Swarovski Z6i 2.5-15x56 P HD with their personal, ballistic cam (PBC) cut for Hornady's 123-grain SST factory load. The rifle holds about ½" but in truth the Z6 was a bit wasted on what is a shorter range deer and fox gun, plus I had other and bigger plans for the Z6. So I went back to my old and trusty 1" bodied Kahles 3-10x50 CT, which was the glass I took to Africa for the first time in 2005 with Mil-Dot reticule. It went into a set of Sports Match 15mm rings, which are purpose-built for the CZ527. Their diverse and innovative range of mounts is huge and caters for all needs be you airgunner or rifle shooter.

The end result is a compact rifle and calibre I love that is probably a bit lighter and certainly more shootable than before. I already had the scope and moddy and the cost of the stock and rings were both very good so it did not cost a lot to achieve my end result.

{ TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS }

- **Price: Boyd's Varmint stock £POA**
  Ultimate Stalker moderator £POA
  Sports Match CZ527 rings £24.95
- **Contact: Boyd's Stocks, CZ rifles, Ultimate Stalker moderator & Hornady ammunition: Edgar Brothers Ltd, 01625 613177**
  Sports Match rings & mounts: Sports Match Ltd, 01525 381638 www.sportsmatch-uk.com
  Kahles scopes: RUAG AmmoTec U.K Ltd, 01579 362319
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Stock detail; it's a lovely TH layout note the slots in the forend of the Light Varmint

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Abbreviations Explained

SP - Soft Point
PSP - Pointed Soft Point
SPBT - Soft Point Boat Tail
PSPBT - Pointed Soft Point Boat Tail
SPRN - Soft Point Round Nose
FSP - Flat Soft Point
HPBT - Hollow Point Boat Tail
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FMJBT - Full Metal Jacket Boat Tail
RNFP - Round Nose Flat Point

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S9377M	.22cal 77gr HPBT Match Moly pkt500	£154.50
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GLOCK NON GLOCK!

It had to happen, we now have a 22 rimfire long barrelled pistol (LBP) version of one of the most iconic post war pistols; ***Pete Moore*** investigates

Though Glock-like the SRC17 uses a Tac Sol slide and mag kit and an alloy frame

First of all Suffolk Rifle Co's SRC17 LBP is not a Glock. Yes it looks like one but the dedicated 22 Long Rifle slide is made by Tactical Solutions as is the magazine and the frame is aluminium alloy and not polymer as the original.

INTERESTING

From post handgun ban Britain the growth of pistol-like handguns started small with the legal requirement of a 12" barrel and 24" overall length conforming to a new Section 1 directive of a Large Firearm. However, it's the 22 rimfire semi-autos that have taken off to become the preferred equipment today. The SRC17 adds to this choice that has mainly been filled by Colt 1911-types and others.

Without doubt the Glock-like lines of the SRC17 will endear it to many shooters old and new. I shot Glocks for many years pre-ban and loved the 'drastic plastic'! It's an unusual design as it has no manual safety like a 1911, with a trigger safety blade there to stop accidental operation only. Nor does it need one as it offers a sort of semi-double action (D/A) feel as it trips the striker, which makes for a rather long and mushy pull.

Keep it simple stupid: control detail – mag and slide catches and stripping latch, note the signature, blade-in-blade trigger set up

MATERIAL CHANGE AND IMPROVEMENT

Real Glocks show a polymer grip frame with tiny, L-shaped steel rail sections the slide runs on. On first inspection it looks under-engineered but in practice it works well. However the alloy frame of the SRC17 is aluminium with proper and larger integral rails. Like the modern Glock there's an integral Picatinny rail in front of the trigger for lights and lasers.

Another change is to the steel slide as the main spring sits in a removable alloy bushing that fits into the nose of the slide. On the Glock the nose section is formed integral to retain the recoil spring and guide rod. The trigger mech etc. looks identical and I would guess these bits are bought-in.

LEGAL ESSENTIALS

Typically the barrel is 12.1" with a dummy moderator/shroud, which is the fashion! The muzzle is threaded ½ x 28 UNEF so you can fit a real moddy if you wish! Plus the mandatory extension rail (coat hanger or

The Vortex Venom compact dot was an ideal pairing with the pistol

wrist brace) is at the rear to make up the mandatory 24.1" overall length. Regardless of the legal requirements; this class of handgun offers a lot of fun shooting and though I would not want one, I am gladdened that so many people do, and to a degree this sort of kit has both saved and resurrected handgun-type shooting and competition in the UK!

CONTROLS AND LAYOUT

Controls are pretty basic, most notable is the fact the pistol does not use an external, drop hammer like a Colt 1911-type, being striker-fired instead! The mag catch is located on the left of the grip at the trigger guard junction and is a large, square, cross-bolt that is operated by the firing hand thumb. This control is quite large and is all too easily operated by accident, or in a holster that covers the button. It could do with being a bit shorter to avoid hiccups, or use a stronger spring! Directly above this is the manual bolt release catch, which automatically holds open after the last round; simple and easy.

The only other control is the stripping catch, which is a tiny ambi, pull-down plate about 1.5" forward of the slide release – more of that later. The trigger though offering a long and mushy pull that stacks up a bit towards the end is surprisingly light at around 4-5 lbs; certainly compared to my centrefire Glocks. Truth is the design is not known for their good triggers and it's something you learn to live with! Though there are a number of after-market options available.

CLASSIC RATTLE

One original characteristic that the SRC17 retains is that rattley feel as the slide does move about a bit. I remember seeing my first Glock 17 (9mm) in 1984 and thinking what a pile of junk and being very surprised when it shot as well as it did and did not come apart! I am not sure what it is about them, but they just work and shoot beyond expectations. I would stick my neck out and say it's probably the finest modern battle pistol ever made; not pretty but tough and reliable!

The wrist brace is a solid piece of stainless steel with a wide end that's threaded so you could if you want add weight to improve balance; maybe not! You can also opt for aluminium instead. The front and back straps of the grip frame are heavily checked with the sides being

Glock-u-like; yet another 22 semi-auto LBP the SRC17

Correct position of the return spring

The new alloy frame features integral guide rails, but the internals are all Glock

textured. The slide has vertical retracting groves at the rear. Sights are basic with the standard Glock, polymer U-notch with white outline at the rear in a transverse dovetail for windage adjustment, up front is a low blade with a white dot (non-adjustable). They are adequate but a number of companies offers better, such as Trijicon.

This gun came with a high blade up front (to clear the moddy) and Suffolk Rifle fitted a Vortex Venom 3 MOA compact red dot at the rear on a universal base. I'm not a fan of red dots but on a pistol like this they make a lot of sense and would improve accuracy.

Feed is from a polymer magazine with a capacity of 10-rounds, which rather belies one of the Glocks original USPs of a high payload; the original Glock 17 held 17 rounds of 9mm! I was told a 15-shot is imminent and a 25-rounder is in development too. The sides of the mag are slotted and the follower has external, pull-down tabs which facilitates filling. The odd thing is the magazine protrudes out of the grip by ¾" and looks a bit messy!

Long barrel and coat hanger aside and perhaps because I was a Glock shooter I started warming to the SRC17 and it brought back fond and familiar memories. There's also the possibility of a properly moderated version with a shorter barrel and fixed can to make up the 12"requirement.

SURPRISING FINDINGS

As usual I assembled a good cross section of ammo, standard, match, high and ultra high velocity (HV) and even 22 subs just to see if it could handle this low powered loading. Some LBPs do and some don't and that's the way it is! On Suffolk Rifle's website they state: "The only ammunition that we support is CCI Mini-Mag. You may use other ammunition but expect varied results. Like all rimfire pistols, low powered .22 will not cycle the slide so you should concentrate on high power, high velocity ammo."

The gun was quite fussy about what it shot and did not like Winchester's sub-sonic or their match-grade Xpert either. Nor did it like Remington's Wildcat (ultra HV) and their HV, with these loads it stove-piped (case ejects and is caught by the slide as it goes ▶

FOR
Good accuracy potential
Nice to see more choice in LBPs

AGAINST
No spare mag included
Watch out for that long mag catch

VERDICT
More choice for the LBP shooter
An iconic design
Find a load it likes

The SRC17 like the rest of its brothers wears the near obligatory dummy moderator

Slide off showing the recoil spring assembly removed, note the position of the adaptor

The barrel slides out rearwards

Pistol stripped; the job is easy just a tad different in some places

forward) a lot. It was OK with the Mini-Mag and Winchester Laser (HV), but what it really liked was Fiocchi's HV, which it ran very well, equally and surprisingly some old Mag Tech (CBC) standard round nose. But, and as with any rimfire semi-auto firearm, you just have to find the right load and you're sorted! Plus I have always found that a running-in period can be required to get rid of the high spots.

Accuracy was good enough; off the bench at 25 yards you can expect 2-3" groups. On speed reloads where you palm the magazine into the grip then slide it off to make the weak hand grip, I found I was wiping off the lower plate so the spring popped out. Probably me being over aggressive on my reloading drills! But that's what you get for 20-years off shooting Practical Pistol!

STRIP

Taking the SRC17 down is a little different but very simple. Remove the magazine and dummy can and fire the action. Pull the slide back about ½" and hold it there while at the same time pull down on the stripping catch and hold it. Then just pull the slide/barrel forward and off the frame. Next and under control lift up the rear of the spring/guide rod assembly and remove it rearwards, the front bushing can be pulled back about ½" the lifted out too (note its position with the angled wings facing towards the muzzle. Finally with the slide base up (sights down) pull the barrel forward ¼" and lift the rear chamber section up then slide the whole thing rearwards. Reassemble in reverse order ensuring the spring/guide rod sits in the lower, semi-circular cut-out at the front of the chamber section. Re-engage the slide with the rails and push rearwards and you will see the stripping catch move up and down as it re engages and locks the barrel in place.

The pistol was quite fussy on ammo and shot Fiocchi's 40-grain HV load best

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Name	SRC17
Type	semi-auto LBP
Calibre	22 Long Rifle
Capacity	10 (DM)
Barrel	12.5"
Length	24.5"
Dummy moderator	Y
Iron sights	Y
Price	£1199
Spare mags	£35
Vortex Venom red dot sight	£180
Contact	Suffolk Rifle Co, 01473 730035

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Sleep Over Club

Pete Moore hosts the 2015 'hands across the water' hunting weekend between England and Croatia

I first spoke to Tomo Svetic in I think 1995 when I was the Editor of Guns & Shooting Magazine. I got an e-mail from him asking about self-loading rifles for hunting, I gave him my recommendations and also told him that centrefire self-loaders had been banned in the UK since 1988. He explained that it was not for the UK but Croatia, in the end he settled on a Benelli Argo in 30-06, which is a super rifle! At the time I knew nothing of his company Artemis Hunting nor of him, but he seemed like an OK guy and I thought no more about it.

I think about 5-years later, which by that time I was the Editor of Shooting Sports as Guns & Shooting died with the handgun ban, he got in contact again and asked if I would like to go boar shooting in Croatia so I could do an article for the magazine. I had a great time and also we became mates too and since then we have done an annual, exchange-a-hunt kind of thing. Tomo lives in the UK and now works for Blaser Sporting, though still looks after Artemis too and is probably the most enthusiastic guy I have ever met, as I have no doubt readers that have met him will agree.

MY TURN

My last trip with Tomo was to Hungary in 2014 where I got a triple on pigs (oh yeah) and also fell out of the high seat; that's hunting! So this year it was my turn to host

Muntblack; nice shot mate you knocked it into a mud-filled ditch...

Bloody hell mate! Tomo testing the GSG AK47

an event, which was on the land I shoot over in Suffolk. The hit list offered muntjac, roebuck, red stags (if one turned up), plus rabbits, hares and a bit of foxing, so a full weekend. As luck would have it this coincided with the loan of a Great Wall Steed 4x4, so we not only had the guns and hardware, we also had the wheels too!

Guns came down to a Blaser R8 Professional Success in 270 Win, a 6.5 Creedmoor custom, a Ruger M77/17 (17HMR) and a 6.5 Grendel Custom. Optics consisted of a Zeiss Victory HT 3-12x56 with ASV turret (Blaser), Night Force 3-15x56 (6.5 Creedmoor), Schmidt & Bender 3-12x50 Zenith (17HMR) and a Swarovski 2.5-15x56 Z6i on the Grendel. I loaned Tomo my Leica 8x56 BRF laser rangefinder binos and used my Swarovski 10x42 EL Range BRFs. Ammo went to Winchester's 130-grain BST (270) and their 17-grain BST for the HMR, Hornady fed the Creedmoor (120-grain BT) and Grendel 123-grain SST.

"Bloody hell mate, this is unbelievable" he said when I dug out a 22 rimfire GSG AK47"

Tomo tipped up Friday midday and we loaded up the Steed and were on our way. Great to see him again and like all shooters do we just talked about guns and hunting all the way to Suffolk. We got on the range for a check zero and general muck about, as I also had to test some guns for the magazine and he was more than happy to help. "Bloody hell mate, this is unbelievable" he said when I dug out a 22 rimfire GSG AK47, 44 Magnum Chiappa 1893 Alaskan lever-action and a custom 223 AR15; Tomo likes his shooting!

Yeah I've still got the moves!

RUMBLES AND HIGH SEATS

We decided on a junk food approach to dining for the weekend so around 18.00 I took him to the best fish & chip shop in Suffolk – The Rumbles. Large haddock and Southern fried chicken and chips oh yeah! Then it was off to the hunt, but neither of us saw anything shootable. My friend Andrew Johnson who owns the land volunteered to drive us around for a spot of rabbits/hares and foxing. He bought along his Remy 700 custom, 22-250 Ackley Improved with NV scope on top and I loaded up the 17HMR and sat in the back ready with the spare mags (I know how Tomo shoots) and to watch the fun. We lamped for a couple of hours and Tomo got a good bag of critters, he's a really instinctive shot be it on rabbits or wild boar, then Andrew spotted a fox and things got serious. We stopped and he called it in though it was twitchy and dropped it at 150-yards with his 22-250. Given the fact Andrew runs pheasant shoots in the season standard operating procedure on Mr Charles is shoot on sight!

▶ This is an impressive calibre, seriously flat shooting and devastating when it hits and ideal for those longer shots too.

REVEILLE 04.00

Tired and happy we turned into our green maggots (sleeping bags) ready for the morning. Up at 04.00 I drove him to a low seat overlooking a meadow and I tried a new seat about ¾ mile away. After about an hour I heard a shot and he texted me to say he'd got a muntjac and was looking for it; weidmansheil! I saw nothing on my patch and an hour later went to pick him up. When I arrived it looked like it was a black muntjac, which to my knowledge does not exist. It was a little buck and as it had dropped to the shot it rolled into a muddy drainage ditch hence the colour, no matter 1-point for team Croatia.

With the munty gutted and in the freezer the plan was breakfast and a trip to Riflecraft, which is about 30 minutes from the farm. Always fun as there's lots to see and buy. Now Tomo can eat and packs it away like a hungry T-Rex and the Lollipop Cafe was just the place to take him. It's a 1950s style American diner and the breakfast he had was like a fry up with a mixed grill balanced on top. I thought I could eat but I sat in awe as he ploughed through it!

Tomo bought a shed load of reloading components at Riflecraft and I picked up my 6.5 Grendel that was in for re-stocking. So it was back to the range for more testing and fun, fish & chips for tea again then out for the deer.

MUNTJAC CENTRAL

I put Tomo in a new seat in a tiny clearing in a copse and I went off to a little glade I knew. I had yet to score but felt confident

Sunday morning success – a nice little roe buck fell to the R8

Luck or good shooting; a bit of both I reckon, well done mate!

something would turn up as it was a lovely evening for the roe to come out. As it happened my luck was not in, which is the way it can be and I did not hear any firing from Tomo's location either, though he was using a moderated rifle and in heavy woodland. The light started to go so it was time to see what he was up to.

He came out of the copse looking normal, "how did you do mate" I said? Then I looked past him and saw three, yes, three munties stretched out by the seat like a flight of plaster ducks; "you jammy bugger, well done!" He told me that they were literally coming out of the woodwork and he could have shot more but left it at three. Croatia 4 with England yet to score... I was very pleased for him as after all he was the guest hunter, but I also felt a little twinge of envy too.

By the time we had finished gutting and putting them in the freezer it was dark and decided to get an early night for the final hunt in the morning.

DOES 1 ROE = 4 MUNTIES?

Final day and up early. I put Tomo on a long ride as Andrew told me there was a good chance of roe as he had seen some there a couple of times that week. I went to a seat in Huntston wood we called the scaffold as it's more a tower, which sits in the middle of four rides. I decided on the 270 as the longest shot is 245 yards – just in case.

The wood had recently been coppiced so visibility was good. After two days of not even seeing a deer I was optimistic but not that confident. I had been in the seat about two hours and reckoned it was another no show. Then in the way roe seem to do a nice buck literally materialised in a spot I had just been looking at. It was 160 yards away to my left and suddenly my heart started thumping with excitement and my breathing quickened.

God I felt like a novice again on my first deer; this was ridiculous! I think it was the fact this was a chance I had been waiting for all weekend. At 160-yards the 270 is point and shoot and calming myself down I placed the cross just on its elbow dropped it an inch and fired. Thump, it went down and rolled into a drainage ditch, which was dry. Sliding down the side I picked it up and threw it on the bank then gutted it! I was very happy - surely one roe buck = four muntjac; well it was worth a go! Final score Croatia 4 England 1. No matter a truly great weekend with one of my best friends, may they long continue!

Hares and rabbits did not stand a chance from Mr Svetic

I packed my Blaser Wilde Wane game carrier, which is a useful piece of kit

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Shoot, Shoot, Shoot!

2015's invite was my third to Ulfborg for the now annual Fieldshooting event where journalists from across Europe are invited to come along, eat, drink and shoot to make sure all the latest kit that the manufacturers bring along has their feedback and in some cases, seal of approval. This year 25 attendees arrived at Billund airport to be ferried along to the Ulfborg Skyttecenter for two days but first point of action was the usual 'getting to know you' meal where all the faces there could get to know one another.

Each year there are several familiar attendees, one of which has become me and several new faces to make up teams of five. The initial testing day on Saturday is followed by a competition element on Sunday, bragging rights for which are keenly sought. Introductions from our hosts Zeiss, Sauer, Norma, Blaser and Harkila laid out the equipment we would be issued with and using for the duration, the whole 'this is your rifle' speech. The new Zeiss V8 4.8-35x60 scope which was totally secret up to now was laid before us, Sauer 404 rifle in 308 Winchester, Norma TipStrike ammunition and various Blaser shotguns. The first novelty event was dressing up in Harkila's Ultra High-Tec, Gore-Tex/Down filled jackets to spend ten minutes each inside a 20' refrigerated shipping container, brought to Ulfborg specifically to try out this clothing for the super chilled weather of the Scandinavian North. Or it might just have been to keep the Schnapps we tasted inside chilled?

LITTLE TIME FOR SLEEP

A few hours' sleep and breakfast drifted us into Saturday morning where our ear defenders, rifles and ammunition were issued before spending an hour on the range to get comfortable with the kit and check zero. Harkila issued Alta backpacks and we stuffed these with spare clothing to pad out a good front rest/firing support for use throughout the weekend, and carry our sticks. Viper-Flex Quadpod Traveller shooting sticks are the three part carbon fibre version of the superb standard units I tested a few months ago in Shooting Sports. These split into three tubular sections allowing more compact storage for travelling, yet remain just as stable as their standard counterparts allowing serious long range potential from a standing rested position.

The Zeiss and Sauer crew had set up all the rifles with a standard ring for the scope's elevation turret which with 5mm @100m clicks, only has half the amount of overall adjustment available that the 2.8-20x56 V8 with its 1cm clicks has. Although this does

The reason we were invited: Sauer's new 404 rifle topped with Zeiss's latest version of their V8 the 4.8-35x60

The 404 differs a bit from Sauer's earlier 202

ASV turrets on the V8 are THE best there are!

Norma TipStrike ammo was 'plentiful' and good quality fodder too

The de-cocker is the primary new benefit to the 404 in my opinion, very secure and easily operated silently

The tool to do it all, easily accessed as the forend sling stud

Chris Parkin attends the 3rd Zeiss Fieldshoot and gets to test some new kit and have a lot of fun too

increase the precision of adjustment on a x35 magnification scope with a Mil-Dot reticule, one might assume it would be able to go out a little further! However, even with the ZeroStop disabled, we still had full functionality out to the 600m maximum shooting distance in Ulfborg. A second focal plane Mildot reticle also seemed a little odd as the Zeiss' No. 60 is without doubt my favourite sporting reticle. Illumination was just in the centre and the controls, like other V8s were utterly blissful.

A SLIGHT PERSONAL SULK

ASV+ turrets are as close to perfect as I can imagine on a sporting rifle, fast, secure and accurate as well as easy to perform primary setup on and set visual zero on the dial. This new 4.8-35x60 has a little more light entering the objective's Lotutec-coated lens and has the fantastic illumination setup with a push button ON/OFF and rotary dial to set intensity above the ocular body. It remembers your chosen setting at shut down and of course, automatic cant and up/down angle extinguishes that crisp centre dot when the gun is not in use.

A certain amount of the overall elevation and windage travel (130-clicks/10.3 mils elevation. 85/8.5 mils windage) within the scope tube is required to zero the rifle. On sporting optics with systems like ASV+ where a ZeroStop is in place but no rotation indicator, you only have one complete rotation of the turret to play with from whatever zero distance you choose to the furthest you require. The 5 Mils on this V8 would for example take you from 100m zero to 840m on a 7mm Rem Mag which is way more than adequate, but when you move back toward more mundane calibres it seems a shame not to use 1cm clicks and get ten mils into one rotation, rather than disabling the zerostop to use two? Don't get me wrong, this scope is utterly superb but to my mind, not just quite as perfect as its 2.8-20 'little' brother

ROOM FOR 101, 202, 303 & 404

With a rail mount in place, the scope was very sleek in profile mounted atop the new Sauer 404 rifle. In 308 Winchester, this is a perfectly versatile all-rounder and in the Synchro's synthetic thumbhole stock, very comfortable to shoot and well anchored in place with a rubberised butt pad. The adjustable cheekpiece is slender in profile so allows a good cheek weld without canting your head too far over, it has to be dropped fully to remove the bolt.

The bolt is the key departure of the new 404 which is otherwise visually very similar to the 202! A full de-cocker system is now

incorporated with a straightforward thumb button/slider switch sited on the bolt shroud, forward for fire and back for safe. It was easy to use, fast, silent and very reassuring. There were many stages where four shots were required over the weekend so with a 3+1 loaded gun, the system was well used by the end of two days and I liked it.

The forend stud is a natty little tool incorporating a push button to slip it from its mortice and flips open to expose the single Allen key that adjusts all elements of the gun. A half turn in the recessed screw below the forend allows the front part of the stock to slip off and here you can access a slightly simplified barrel change setup. Also new is a 4-stage rotary dial to adjust the trigger pull weight from an 'icy' 500 grams to over 2lbs. It was nice to be able to adjust it so easily but although I regularly use a 1lb Jewel on all my own guns, I preferred stage II on the unit as I feel it gave a crisper feel. III & IV were equally predictable and for standard calibre hunting, I'd probably use stage III all the time. For those who like further personalisation, you can now also adjust the blade for reach and angle to perfect the fit. Although hidden by the one piece rail mount, the 404 has proprietary scope bases machined into the action so none of the bolt on Weaver fit or Apel units we may have sought in the past.

FUELLING THE FIRE

Norma's 170gr .308 TipStrike ammunition is rated for medium game so equating well to what we may call larger deer in the UK, it runs at 2625 fps and proved accurate and dependable. However, Ulfborg is more about shooting than load development, so off we went for a day of scientific (yeah right) experimentation. We shot a lot of running targets with both 101 and 404 bolt action Sauers, as well as the semi auto 303 which is great fun! Saturday is about trying out the kit and getting lead pictures in your mind on both running stag and tusker for the following day's competition. We also got to use the 1.1-8x30 V8 which was stunning. It's obviously defined as a moving target/driven scope but with massive field of view, you can happily eke out a little more precision shot placement at 2/3x mag yet in the field, well at 8x it's a great choice for longer shots prone or from a high seat. Truly a market leader, it's great to see technology so well specified and this was a cracker, my shots on the driven deer felt far more assured this year. We took on some speed shooting challenges against reactive targets, press ups and running between courses of fire and a few novelty shots with .338 Lapua Magnum Blaser R8's with GRS stocks. This gun is an absolute delight, a real gentleman's 'bopper', I could have shot it all day.

Zeiss Fieldshooting Weekend, Ulfborg 2015; as always a great time with the latest gear

The long range prize was taken standing this year, 4 out of 4 at 540 metres on a steel plate by Dr Nina Krueger

NEVER STOP DIALLING

The most important trial and one that is what makes Ulfborg the venue of choice for Zeiss particularly, is the multi distance range. Although not quite the maximum distance we can reach on the other lanes (600m), multiple targets everywhere from 50-540 metres from a single firing point mean you can dial back and forth, shoot from any imaginable position and really work out how best to hold, control, support and shoot, as refining the settings on your turrets. Watching the wind is always helpful because Sunday is competition day and having an idea of how much windage to dial in for scoring shots is mandatory.

Well I will open with the simple line; I shot badly, nothing tragic but none of the magic from 2013 or 14 that won me prizes. I won't attribute blame to any of the kit, it all worked perfectly but I wasn't on my game. I wasn't placing my shots quite perfectly and although I improvised well and shot the tricky

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Even the photographer couldn't resist the GRS-Blaser 338 Lapua Magnum at 600 metres

shots from standing, kneeling and high seats well, I couldn't get those perfect scores on the prone shots I used to take for granted. I knew exactly how this comp worked; I just failed admirably with a smile on my face, hey ho.

BLASER GLORY

In a complete turnaround of my skillset, I shot the Blaser F3 shotgun stage really well this year, not usually my forte but Blaser and Rottweil (cartridges) had certainly given us a lot of ammo to 'play' with the day before, practising flushes I had thoroughly enjoyed. Steel shot is required here but it never seemed to make odds at what were in all honesty, NOT 45 yard edge on battues, twisting and looping enough to make you dizzy. Ulfborg is great fun and my travels have not yet found anywhere that can replicate the 35 firing 'lanes' (each a complete range in itself) and the brilliant event this is!

Arriving at a firing point and being instructed to put 4 -shots into a fox target using one leg of your shooting stick over 120 metres, and then immediately swapping to a 300 metre boar, prone with your rucksack for support, is a true test of improvised hunting shots and great fun. Targets like moose and huge tuskers are thrown in and you always get the opportunity to study them prior to shooting. Here you can clearly identify the exact high scoring zones, not always exactly where you might place your bullet when hunting either.

IMPROVISATION IS THE NAME OF THE GAME

We had shots from high seats where we were encouraged to use any of our carried accessories for the day to further stabilise or shooting position and it was great to see different shooters trying out various strategies. As always, we had the Sauer 202 Hatari in 458 Lott to place one brain and one heart shot into an Elephant silhouette. Cracking fun, even if some found it a little bruising. The day ended with the medal ceremony and podium placings. It was great to see the diminutive Dr Nina Krueger from Hamburg, at 4'10" tall, walk away with the long range prize. She beat us all shooting standing from sticks, none of the prone malarkey us wussy chaps had chosen! Long may Ulfborg continue, the equipment presented is always absolutely premium and any rounds left un-shot after 2 days are almost hidden away in disgrace, as if to say we hadn't been trying hard enough to melt the barrels Sauer and Blaser provided. A few days after my return I still had grains of the flour like Ulfborg sand in my trouser pockets and it was a reminder that none of the equipment missed a beat in this harsh, aggressive abrasive environment and that is a fact that Zeiss, Sauer and Blaser can be very well satisfied with as like a hire car, there is no faster gun than a loaner!

The V8's 60mm objective lets in a load of light

THANKS TO:

- Zeiss Optics, www.zeiss.co.uk
- Sauer rifles, www.garlands.uk.com
- Norma Ammunition, www.ruag.co.uk
- Blaser, www.blaser.de
- Harkila clothing, http://harkila.com/en-gb
- Viper-Flex Shooting Sticks, www.viper-flex.com

6.5MM REVIVAL

400 yard groups like this are possible with careful wind judgement due to the high BC values from the slim line 6.5mm bullets

Below Left: Typical accuracy with the 123grain Lapua Scenar bullets

Below Right: Need I say more, this is the norm for this efficient cartridge, like the PPC round it is intrinsically accurate

Bruce Potts praises the abilities of a 6.5mm calibre from Lapua of Finland

The Swedes have always known the benefits of this best of metric calibres, the 6.5mm or 0.260", just look at the old 6.5x55mm Swedish, which is still going strong today and is the entry-level calibre for moose. These bullets possess both high ballistic coefficients (BC) and a good range of weights. This makes for a super efficient deep penetrating projectile that can be depended on to hit the target at close to long range as well as retain sufficient energy for a humane shot.

New 6.5mm cartridges were slow to be accepted and some just bombed like the 6.5 Rem Mag, .264 Win Mag but there certainly has been a resurgence of late. The older 260 Rem has been with us forever it seems and Hornady's 6.5 Creedmoor has proved its worth but for me one of the best is the 6.5x47 Lapua designed by the Finnish case and cartridge manufacturer Lapua and has followed a trend for smaller efficient case design, primarily for long range target shooters but also benefitting us hunters.

It has been universally accepted amongst the bench rest and FT shooters but very few rifle manufacturers chamber their wares for this calibre which is bizarre as it's a superb all-rounder.

CARTRIDGE PROFILE

Another superb efficient mid-sized cartridge to eke every last drop of velocity and down range performance you can from the ballistically excellent 6.5mm bullets. The case conforms to the small is beautiful philosophy and is designed to fit into a short action yet still hold a 48.5-grains of water capacity. Think of it as a short .260 Rem, the case is 1.850"with a cartridge overall length (COL) of 2.795 and a trim length of 1.840". Couple to this the use, unsurprisingly, of the superb Lapua brass and you have something ideally suited for handloaders!

The case also has a small rifle primer and primer flash hole for consistent ignition and a strong head (rear) section that allows internal pressure loads up to 63000 psi; not bad!

Like the PPC and BR cartridges the Lapua is a very easy calibre to load for and it seems near impossible to produce an inaccurate round. Some cases are like that and the 6.5x47L can handle powders running from fast to slow dependent on bullet weights. Usually projectiles from 100 -140 grains are shot with the 120-130gr bullets performing best.

PROPELLANTS

Powders such as Vit N133, Vit N 140, RL15 or RL17 all being good performers enabling bullets of 120 grains to achieve 2900 fps, 130-grainers to speed along at 2800 fps and 140 grain bullets at 2650 fps. These velocities coupled to bullets with high ballistic coefficients (BSs) in the 0.5 to 0.6 G1 values means great accuracy and performance be it punching paper or shooting live quarry! Barrel twist rates are recommended at 1 in 8" which will enable you to shoot all the bullets the 6.5 is capable of up to 140-grain weight.

Reload equipment is also well catered for with the fast acceptance of this little gem. I use Redding Type S Match Die set to reload the 6.5x47L; I used a full length version with replaceable neck bushing. In that way you can match the neck diameter and alter neck tension on the bullet with differing replacement bushings. I used the 0.288" bush for my Lynx 94 straight pull rifle and it is important to choose the full length die not the neck only version as primary extraction can be tough on some straight pulls so this full length die negates any problems. The other die is the Micro-meter topped seating die to give excellent precision in seating your different bullets to altering depths so you can record the dial indicated and then return to that figure when using a different load.

IN FIELD USE

I have tried factory ammo which is very good but reloads are the way to go to match the

LIGHTER

Bullet	Weight	Load	Velocity fps	Energy ft/lbs
Sierra	85 grain hollow point	35.0 grains of Vit N133	3057	1764
		35.5gr	3156	1879
		36.5gr	3227	1965
		37.0gr	3262	2008
Lapua Scenar	108 gr	34.0 gr Vit N133 powder	2809	1893
		35.0gr	2919	2043
		36.0gr	2980	2130
Nosler Ballistic Tip	120 gr	36.5 grains of Vit N140	2722	1975
		37.0gr	2789	2209
		38.0gr	2849	2163
	HOT	39.0 gr	2908	2254
Nosler Ballistic Tip	120gr	39.0gr of RL17 powder	2913	2261
		40.0gr	2982	2370
	100% fill	41.0gr	3051	2480
Scenar Match	123 gr	37.0gr of RL15 powder	2902	2244
		37.5gr	2936	2297
		38.0gr	2970	2351
		38.5gr	3004	2405

MEDIUM

Bullet	Weight	Load	Velocity fps	Energy ft/lbs
Berger VLD	130gr	37.0gr of RL17	2784	2237
		38.5gr	2781	2197
		39.0gr	2921	2462
Hornady SST	129gr	37.5gr of RL 17	2795	2238
		38.0gr	2829	2292
		38.5gr	2863	2348
		39.0gr	2896	2403
Hornady A-Max	140 gr	37.0gr of RL17	2730	2317
		38.0gr	2795	2428
		38.5gr	2827	2484
Berger Hybrid	140gr	35.0 gr of IMR4007SSC	2572	2057
		36.0gr	2641	2169
		37.0gr	2710	2283
	HOT	37.5gr	2744	2341
Hornady SST	140 gr	36.0gr grains of Reloder RL17	2677	2228
		36.5gr	2710	2283
		37.5gr	2776	2395
		38.5gr	2840	2508

Left to right: 120gr A-Max, 123gr Scenar, 140gr Berger, .308 as comparison

individual chamber and throating dimensions of your rifle as most are custom items anyway. But out of interest from the Lynx 94 factory Scenar Match bullets with the 108-grainer's travel at 2841 fps/1936 ft/lbs whilst the 123-grain versions hits 2711 fps/2008 ft/lbs. Interestingly these were in cold Scotland as in Surrey in 30° heat the figures were 2888 fps for the 108-grain bullets and 2783 fps for 123-grainers.

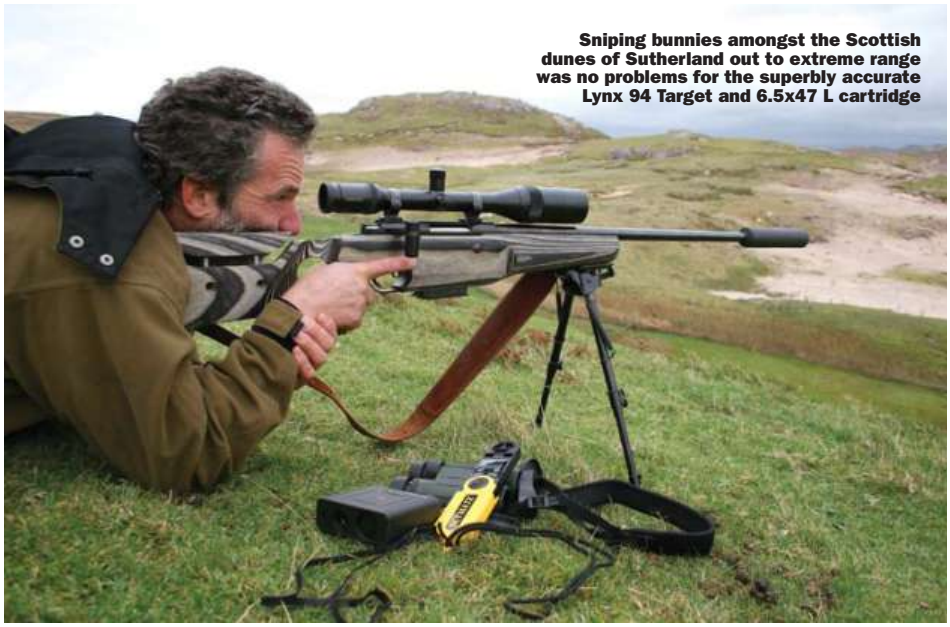
I ran the data through Quickload and QuickTarget Ballistics program to get an accurate trajectory drop and windage compensation which proves excellent for long range Varminting on Scottish bunnies amongst the dunes with 123-gr ain Lapua Scenars. Switch to Nosler 120-grain Ballistic Tips travelling at 2789 fps, not max load but their performance on several roe deer satisfied me of their performance and they were super accurate.

I thought I would sort out a comparison between the 6.5x47L and the bigger more popular deer cartridges such as .308 Win and .30-06 Springfield to see advantages and disadvantages.

6.5x47L	.308Win	30-06
130gr bullet	155gr bullet	155gr bullet
BC 0.552	BC 0.483	BC 0.483
2800fps	2800fps	2950fps
	175GR Bullet	175GR Bullet
	BC 0.515	BC 0.515
	2650fps	2800 fps

You can see the closest .30 cal bullet to the BC of the 6.5x47L is the 175-grainer. Trouble is in the .308 the velocity drops to 2650 fps compared to 6.5x47L of 2800fps. The 6.5 spanks the 308!

Redding Type S match dies make the most of the 6.5x47Lapua round with precise fitting neck bushes and Competition seating die



Sniping bunnies amongst the Scottish dunes of Sutherland out to extreme range was no problems for the superbly accurate Lynx 94 Target and 6.5x47 L cartridge

To get the same velocity from the 308 you have to drop to a 155-grain bullet but the BC is now 0.483 still lower than 6.5x47L.

So to achieve the same BC and velocity of the 6.5x47L you need a 30-06 with a 175-grain bullet at 2800 fps, the 30 cal bullets BC is slightly lower but trajectory will be close.

Only problem is the 6.5x47L only needs 38-40 grains of powder to achieve 2800 fps with a 0.552 BC bullet and the 30-06 needs 58.0 grains! Therefore the 30-06 uses more powder to achieve the same trajectory, kicks more and is louder.

The 30-06 does however win on energy figures as at the same velocity as the 6.5mm the .30cal 175-grain bullet is 45-grains heavier than the 6.5mm 130-grainer therefore the 30-06 will have a similar trajectory of the 6.5x47L but more striking energy on target.

Here`s a few figures:-

- 6.5x47L 130-grain hunting bullet at 2800 fps gives 2264 ft/lbs energy.
- 308 175-grain bullet at 2650 fps gives 2730 ft/lbs
- 30-06 175-grain bullet at 2800 fps gives 3047 ft/lbs

This is where the bigger .30 cals has an advantage but long range shooters love the 6.5x47L because the trajectory is better than the .30 cals and energy does not matter and with less powder, recoil etc you have a better chance of hitting the target

CONCLUSION

The 6.5mm calibre is now getting the attention it has deserved for all these years from new shooters, while oldies will be shouting we already had the 6.5x55mm! Yes I would agree as the old Swede has stayed the course and like the 30-06 Springfield is still popular; both calibres being over

First Roe with the Lynx 94 and 6.5x47L round, the 120-grain Ballistic Tip dropped it where it stood!

Switch to the lighter 85gr Sierra`s and the 6.5 Lapua becomes an excellent fox round too

100-years in military and sporting service. But this new breed of 6.5mm are proving the joys of a smaller pay load, high BC bullets and efficient case design that really works. The 6.5 Creedmoor, .260 Rem, .260 Rem AK are very good too but to me that Lapua 6.5mm is just about perfect for applications here in Britain.

CONTACTS

- **Alan Rhone** 01978 660001 - Lynx Rifles
- **Hannam's Reloading** 01977 681639 - Lapua bullets & Vihtavuori powder
- **Edgar Brothers** 01625 613177 - Hornady bullets & reloading equipment, Alliant & Hodgdon powders
- **JMS Arms** 07771 962121 - Quickload and Quicktarget
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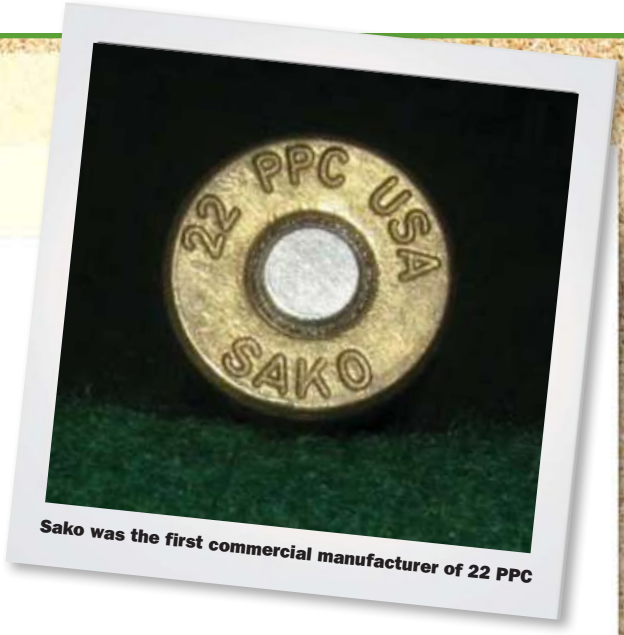
CASE HISTORIES: 22 PPC

Baby Tack Driver

Wheelwrite looks at a calibre of decidedly mixed parentage, but none the less a super accurate performer



Sako was the first commercial manufacturer of 22 PPC

This month we have an American mini racer descended from Russian parents and grandparents. Born in 1974 it was a 'wild' kid until its' teenage years and then commercially adopted in 1987 by Finnish manufacturer SAKO. Yup, it's the gutsy little .22 PPC. That reminds me, I continue to be surprised by the number of experienced target shooters who seem to believe that the cartridge nomenclature 'PPC' refers to a course of fire or competition. Not so. An appropriate word to bind the PPC cartridge family together would be accuracy. The seekers after that accuracy being Benchrest wildcatters Dr. Louis Palmisano and Ferris Pindell, ergo, the Palmisano Pindell Cartridge – PPC!

THE MAGIC ANGLE

Famous grandfather was the AK47/AKM round, the 7.62 x 39mm (it had many other applications). Dad was an early 1950's hunting version in 5.56, based around this robust, compact, rimless case design and called the .220 Russian. Palmisano and Pindell took the .220 cartridge and increased the shoulder angle to what is generally accepted as the small case performance 'holy grail' of 30°. This extensive reworking of the shoulder and neck required subsequent neck turning in order to restore safe working properties, something that must be borne in mind by anyone making the conversion. Another perceived performance feature was something native to this design, the minimal degree of case wall taper. Versions of the case were further fine tuned to incorporate a reduced diameter flash hole under the small rifle primer... a subject that we touched upon in an earlier edition of Handloading Bench.

MULTI-ROLE PERFORMANCE

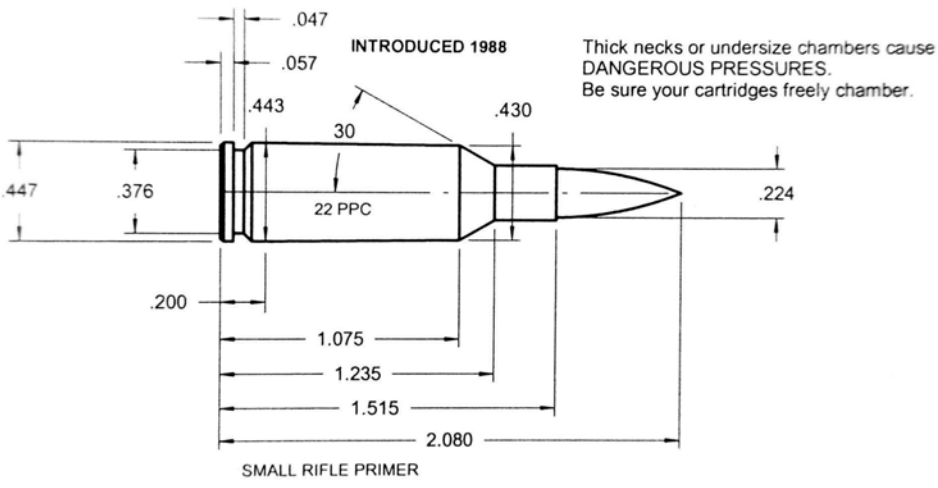
Established as a super cartridge in the world of Bench rest competition it nonetheless makes a highly effective, flat shooting pest control round. Zeroed at 100 yards it can deliver a drop of better than 2½ inches at 200 yards en route to its 'competitive' range of 300 metres+, however, without wind flags, drift can spoil the party! Whilst commercial ammo is available, this really is a handloaders preserve, customising the recipe to the rifle and application.

Both Bench rest and pest control shooters are well served with .224" pills. They're available in a multitude of brands, styles and weights. Brass is not in every store, but can be found. For the dedicated reloader, parent brass can be acquired for conversion, subject to the careful control of case neck size. Tools are listed by most makers and data is published in every current manual that I own. Powders and primers are plentiful, Hodgdon Benchmark getting many favourable reports. Loading densities are all close to 100%, making a double charge impossible. At the high end, velocities close to 3800 fps are achievable. Case life is not that special and demands careful dimensional control.

THE REWARDS OF DEDICATION

Some volume rifle makers list, or have listed the cartridge, SAKO, Remington and Cooper come to mind as well as custom chamberings based upon Ruger and CZ products. One-off and limited run builds based around BAT, Kelbly/Stolle, Remington and RPA actions atop custom MasterClass and McMillan stocks are more common. Whilst current one-hole awards rest with the likes of the 6mm and 6.5mm PPC, the .22 variant continues to offer a great deal. Cheaper to run, more versatile and still a fierce competitor.

PPC schematic



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THE PROCESS

Pete Moore has just got Project Chloe back and gets stocker and gunsmith Enda Walsh to detail the work required to produce a custom rifle

Thing of beauty; Enda Walsh's take on my compact varminter based on an old 222 Rem CZ 527, what a sweet little rifle!

Well the rifle turned up on Friday and it was with trembling hands I unscrewed the box that Enda Walsh had built around it for protection; nice touch. Lifting it out I was gob-smacked by the transformation! The only thing I could recognise was the somewhat archaic looking CZ527 action as it now wore the fluted, 23" Bergara barrel and quite the most beautiful piece of furniture it has ever been my pleasure to wind into! Hopefully I will get to shoot it before I go to press, but I'm not certain and am champing at the bit to do so.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Weight has been kept down without sacrificing stability with a light/medium tapered forend with a generous free-float on the sporter-weight 2/3 fluted tube. My choice of a 14x1mm thread gives maximum diameter at the muzzle and the invisible thread protector is most pleasing! The butt section shows quite a pistol grip that Enda has shaped to suit my large hands and Chloe's smaller ones. Though we made the hand casts to allow this I was unsure as to how it would turn out, but it works! On the left of the grip is a slim thumb shelf, with the right side cut out shaped to perfection. Two other concessions to the gun's dual ownership are the length-adjustable butt pad that uses a 3-pillar alloy plate with a thick rubber pad and a push button adjuster. The combined comb/cheekpiece is height-adjustable by twin Allan screws, Enda cut this section from one piece of the laminate so the pattern matches.

Wood to metal finish is 100% with the action and floor plate inletted exactly flush. Inside it's both pillar and synthetic bedded.

Can you see what it is yet? Stock roughed out, even at this stage I was getting excited

The original rifle as can be seen there's not a lot left

Inside that big lump of ugly green/black laminate was a super custom thumbhole just screaming to get out – the man's a genius

Enda inlets the action first before doing any other stock work, as it gives a base point to work of off

The trigger has been tweaked and breaks at a sublime 1.5 lbs with just enough feel to know where you are with the release. Suffice to say we are very happy with the end result, so now it's over to Enda Walsh to give us the details.

DUAL USER'S OPTIONS

"Initially you specified that you had a donor action to base the build around and that both you and your daughter were going to be using this rifle for hunting and maybe some range work. The fact that two people were to be able to do so and change setup quickly and easily for each was one of the major considerations of the build.

Secondly, calibre choice which was an easy one for me as you had already decided on 222 Remington, which I consider to be an excellent cartridge for the intended uses. Next the barrel to be fitted to the Cz action which would be of sufficient quality to achieve the accuracy I demand of all my rifles.

I contacted Brian Fox at Fox Firearms who distributes Bergara barrels in the UK with the requirement for a 1:12 twist, .224" cal hunting profile barrel and I was more than happy to hear he had exactly what I wanted! Next was to decide on the stock.

GREEN, GREY/BLACK

The customer specified a green and black laminate wood stock, which allows me great flexibility to design and build what is required. We discussed all aspects and design features the customer wanted and I was left with the job of how to make a rifle optimised to allow two different shooters feel like the gun was made for them. Plenty for me to think about there!

While components were being shipped I took the opportunity to send two hand cast kits to the clients with an instructional video. I find these invaluable in allowing me to optimise the hand position in relation to the trigger and also the shooting positions employed.

I prefer to fit the barrel to the action first and then base everything else off this. Firstly I check bore dimensions and bore scope the lands and grooves for any imperfections. It is very rare to find any on a custom barrel but I like to check just to make sure. I then select a suitable range rod for dialling the barrel in on the lathe.

Now comes the process of setting up the barrel in the lathe and dialling it in. It is critical that this is completed correctly in order to extract every last bit of accuracy. Then follows the process of threading the barrel tennon and reaming the chamber. This is a slow process, continually monitoring tolerances until complete. Next comes the muzzle which gets the same dialling- in process in the quest for ultimate accuracy. It's first threaded for a moderator and fitting an invisible thread cap, lastly and very importantly a uniform crown is cut.

STAGE TWO

Having received the hand casts back I was able to assess and plan out the best dimensions, angle and cast the grip needed to have. Considering there would be two different length of pull (LOP) needed I had no choice other than design and install an ▶

Wax on wax off. Action now re-barrelled with a 23", Bergara, fluted, sporting weight tube in 1 – 12" twist rate

Feast your eyes – detail of the butt design, note the adjustable pad to suit two very different LOPs and the comb, the pistol grip is like wearing a glove

easily adjustable butt pad system. Following some development and testing I was happy with the operation of my push button adjustable butt pad.

Also required was an adjustable cheekpiece so I fitted my usual, tried and tested twin-pillar design with locking screws. Unlike the LOP, which would constantly be adjusted as the rifle changed shooters the cheekpiece once set up is very much where it needed to be! All features and inletting are completed while the blank is still squared off and I generally work to a tolerance of 0.02mm.

THE HARD WORK

Next came the exterior shaping which is done mainly by hand. I put great care and attention into getting the grip just right and also working as much as I can with the balance within the constraints of the design. I have done extensive testing on the effects of balance on my F-class rifles and am under no illusions how important it is.

Next came the extremely important job of stress-free pillar bedding. While inletting I make the necessary alterations to accommodate the pillars and bedding compound. I turn each pillar specifically for each screw to exacting dimensions which is critical in achieving an accurate result. As with so many jobs the key to a successful result is in the preparation and there are a lot of small processes that combine to produce the perfect bedding job. I use Devcon bedding compound and find it an excellent product. After three days hardening the action is parted from the stock and any necessary cleaning up done. At this stage the bedding job is tested to make sure that the action sits in the stock stress free.

Barrel blank being chambered; a lot of precision work goes into the process to keep tolerances exact

WASH AND BRUSH UP

Final stage is the installation of sling studs and finish sanding the stock in preparation for a satin lacquer finish. I use a high quality, two-part lacquer which is hard wearing and provides excellent protection while being easy to maintain.

On this particular rifle I adjusted the magazine to allow for better feeding. One last job was to replace the firing pin spring as the rifle had previously suffered from light primer strikes. I installed the new spring and checked firing pin protrusion and all was correct, it was then test fired to ensure proper operation of all components."

PETE'S FURTHER THOUGHTS

To be honest I won't have time this issue to really see what the gun can do, as I'm in studio with the magazine. I have a cross section of factory ammo from Hornady, PPU and Federal to give me some idea of where I need to be going. I also have 100 Lapua 222 Rem Match cases and have already made up some reloads in the following weights 40, 45, 50, 53, 55 and 60-grain options. Never having owned a 222 before I am looking forward to ammunition development. What I want is a 40-grain for pure varminting and a 50/55 for small deer. I'm unsure if the 60s will be viable as speeds are not as quick as 223 but we shall see.

My final thoughts go to future changes as I will probably get the barrel/action

Hand casts allowed Enda to shape the grip to suit my large and Chloe's smaller hands near perfectly

Cerakoted in either black or sniper grey. I am considering fitting a one-piece Picatinny rail, which would allow me to fit night vision and swap scopes easily. On that point my Swarovski 2.5-15x56 Z6i P HD looks like it's going to be the scope for longer range varminting with the lighter Zeiss Duralyt 3-12x50 for deer.

My thanks to Enda Walsh for an amazing job that has really turned a sow's ear, albeit a good one, into a real silk purse. Next month shooting and load development.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

PRICES:
Stock design and build €2600
Supply and fitting barrel €854
Shipping €100

CONTACTS:
Stock and gunsmithing: Custom and Precision Rifles, 00353 876611993 (Enda Walsh)
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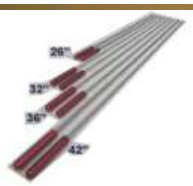
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Working UNDER PRESSURE

Wheelwrite says don't forget the lube; but asks which one is best?

The do's and don'ts of case preparation/processing is a debate that has lasted as long as we've been reloading and will continue. However, there are a number of immutable points to consider. Not least of which is the fact that clean cases are essential for optimum, consistent performance, increased life and the reduction of wear. Initial cleaning with the aid of an ultrasonic bath or media tumbler will rid the fired brass of combustion residues and any other soiling that has become attached - subjects that we've explored before. The end result; cases that are fit for efficient reworking prior to reloading.

TIGHT FIT!

Re-sizing our cleaned brass is a relatively painless exercise in those instances where dies with carbide inserts are available. However, that leaves a whole family of necked, tapered and rare case designs for which such dies cannot be used or simply do not exist. Enter the plain steel sizer die. Easy to machine to the desired size but therefore rather soft and vulnerable to surface damage from grit and other soiling inclusions.

Even worse, it has no natural lubricity and could easily seize in operation with dry brass cases. The answer is lubrication, the use of a virtually incompressible liquid, paste, spray or powder-based materials with excellent slip properties. There are a multitude of recipes and brands available – so many that I imagine few people have tried them all – I confess that I've not!

Iosso Sizing Lube has a strong following in the USA

Lyman Qwik Spray another of the water soluble brews

Indeed, a 'one size fits all' approach to the choice of product is confounded by your actual production process. If you shoot Bench Rest then neck sizing just one case using an easily cleaned, water-dispersible lube will be a likely choice. Whereas full length mass production on a progressive press or batch production on a single station will make different demands.

TYPES AND STYLES

The range of lubes that are most readily available are best divided into their two most common means of removal. Those that are water soluble/dispersible and those that require a solvent such as alcohol to break them down. Within both of these we commonly find aerosol and pump spray liquids, gels, waxes and a number of dry lubes. However, the means of removal should often be your starting point since it can influence the entire cartridge production process!

By way of example, I reload volume batches of ammo on my Dillon RL550B. This progressive offers me a 'start to finish' process, making it most efficient to complete the production using cases that still have lube on them. I therefore dry media vibrate them before use, leaving

the spent primers in place. I then have two options; for full length resizing the cases are laid in rows on an old towel and pump sprayed with an alcohol soluble lube (either Dillon Spray Lube or my own 1:9 recipe Lanolin/Isopropyl Alcohol brew), rolled to rotate them and sprayed again.

VIBRATOR!

I roll the edge of the towel up over the case heads to keep the primer pockets free from over-spray. If I miss a small amount down near the web there will always be enough over-spray dragged down by the die! After production the finished cartridges are vibrated in a separate bowl of untreated corncob media moistened with a few cc's of alcohol. This ensures the removal of residues from the most vulnerable area of the cartridge, the shoulder. Vibrating live rounds? Yes, I had reservations about that but Dillon's tech people say that it is perfectly safe and over a short duration will not dust the propellant. However, that is my choice, so the decision is yours! My alternative when only neck sizing is necessary is to finger wipe lube the cleaned brass with Redding Imperial Bio and then wipe each finished round with a cloth dampened with water and a little washing-up liquid.

If I'm reloading small batches on a single station press for optimum performance then the process changes slightly. Cases are dry media vibrated as before, then either pad-treated with Forster High Pressure Lube or finger wiped with my favourite, Imperial Sizing Wax and sized/de-primed/expanded as necessary. I then clean them down using alcohol wipes bought on Amazon before giving them an Ultrasonic bath. To avoid recontamination from any lube residues floating on the top of the bath I always do a second bath with clean water and additive.

After drying they're ready for assembly. However, in order to prevent a build-up of dried crud I ALWAYS scrub the sizer body and expander plug with a nylon brush dipped in alcohol or swab with an alcohol wipe and then lightly re-smear with fresh lube before I commence work on the new batch. Why do the cleaning before sizing the batch rather than after it? Because the residual film of old lube will protect the surfaces of the tools between usage. Job done.

DIY JOLLOP DANGERS

I mentioned my home brew – well, it's not really mine. It is a widely used crib of the Dillon recipe. However, there are some concoctions on the web forums that really should be avoided, especially those that

Imperial Sizing Wax from Redding is one of my favourites

(Top) Residual lube has to go somewhere - usually the shoulder

(Right) PDQ-21 from Rooster Labs Never tried it! There's so much choice out there it can get confusing

(Bottom) Lyman Lube Pad; probably the most common method of applying the lube to the case

contain even a hint of ammonia as it will react with the brass alloy, potentially causing irregular and dangerous hardening. Mineral oil products should also be treated with suspicion since they are quite difficult to thoroughly remove and in the case of light oils can have a dangerously low flash point when under pressure. (I'm sure many of us have encountered the accidental 'dieselling' of an airgun pellet due to the presence of light gun oil? Well, our chamber pressures are MUCH higher and after all, that's how a diesel engine works).

MY LUBE DEGRADES!

Some of the lube makers claim that there is no need to remove their lube residue after the work is done. Not so. Even the 'bio' and 'green' labelled materials will leave something on the case. In any event, residual lube can and will change the dynamics of the firing sequence. Our brass cartridge case has been designed as a gasket, momentarily gripping the chamber wall during firing. The presence of even a tiny amount of lube undermines this process, thereby increasing the thrust pressure on the head of the case... and on to the bolt or breech face.

Furthermore, these surface contaminants can pressure flow to the area of least resistance along the case wall, usually the shoulder and taper, where dents and deformation will occur. In the worst case, this is the region in which dieselling would be likely to occur. Whatever lube you chose to use, apply it sparingly. In theory the film only needs to be a few molecules thick for it to get the job done... the rest is wasted, merely adding to the amount of cleaning that is required. If you use a proprietary lubing pad, keep it from being flooded with lube and store it in a plastic zip bag to prevent contamination. My thanks to Lee at UniqueTek Inc. for some of the tech data.

The One Shot is the least popular, Imperial Sizing Wax and Dillon spray both meet my needs well

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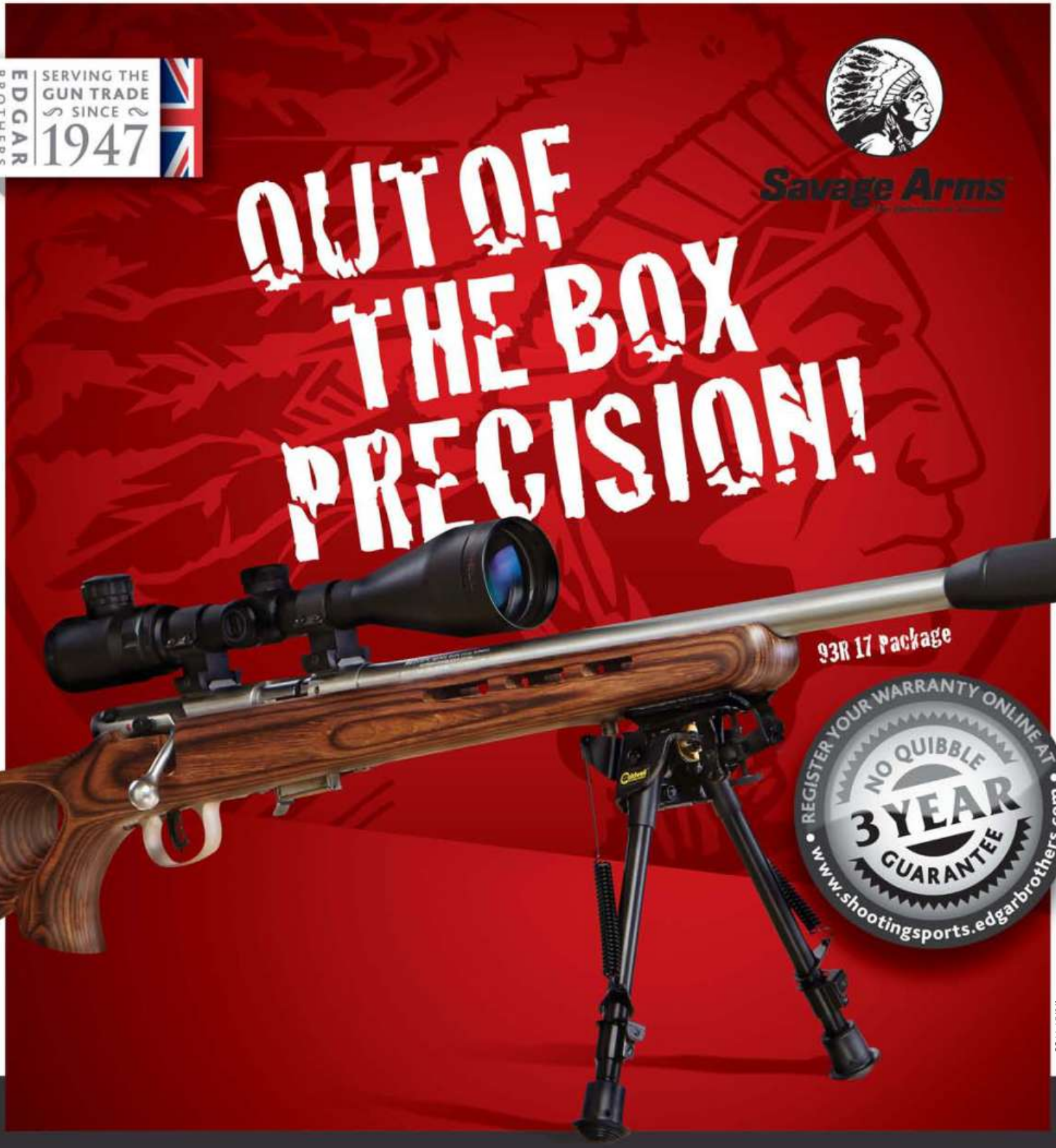

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